A COMPENDIUM:

The Ethical Legacy of Ancient Tamil Literature

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A Compendium: The Ethical Legacy of Ancient Tamil Literature

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K.D.THIRUNAVUKKARASU
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This book is the first Edition of the 14th Publication of Maniyagam. The idea of publishing this thesis as a book is really the fulfillment of a very long cherished wish. It is brought out after 62 years to sensitise a larger community about the ethics of ancient Tamil Culture and tradition.

This thesis was submitted by K.D. Thirunavukkarasu titled TREATMENT OF ETHICS IN ANCIENT TAMIL LITERATURE (in English) who was in Government Academic service, for the coveted Degree of Master of Letters at Annamalai University in 1962 under the guidance of eminent and renowned professors.

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At this juncture it is worth noting that being a FIRST RANK HOLDER, FRANKLIN MEDAL AWARDEE (1954) from University of Madras and SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARDEE (1974), the award of M. Litt., (1962) from Annamalai University was not recognized by the University of Madras as it was stipulated that M.Litt., should have been done at the University of Madras itself for pursuing doctoral research. Even after shifting from Tamil Nadu Government Service (Education) to University of Madras Service the same denial was imposed.

This caused immense mental pressure, delay in promotion, loss of reputation, deterioration in health and lack of enthusiasm in pursuing research.

With profound gratitude to Dr. MACOLM SATHIYANATHAN ADISESHIAH (18 April 1910 – 21 November 1994) distinguished visionary economist and educator, Associate General Secretary of the World University Service in Geneva (UNESCO and UN Service), Founder of Madras Institute of Development Studies, Padma Bhushan Awardee, Member of Parliament - Rajya Sabha and then Vice Chancellor, University of Madras **SCRAPPED THE STIPULATED PROCEDURE THAT WAS IN VOGUE** for more than 16 years.

Considering his teaching and research experience colm was Dr. Malcolm was kind enough to accord permission to carry out his Ph.D. at University of Madras and submit the thesis without a guide.

May this book inspire future research scholars.

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INTRODUCTION

The present study aims to give a perspective on the subject of Moral Philosophy as conceived by ancient Tamils. Its main purpose is to show what is meant by Aram, what is its variability in place and time and what are its relations to other fundamental human interests the problem of good, the development of moral consciousness of the individual and of the society, the relation between religion and ethics and other aspects of Aram.

The term 'Ethics' is used in this thesis to represent the concept of Aram [அறம்]. Aram signifies the sciences of morals, morality, justice and virtue in Tamil

For the present study, I have restricted myself with Tolkappiyam, the Eight Anthologies, the Ten Idylls and Tirukkural, which are generally considered as the Cankam classics. Another reason, which is equally important for restricting this study with these classics in its secular character.

Even in this restricted study of ancient Tamil literature, I cannot do full justice to Tirukkural because of its diverse material which requires a special treatment. I cannot compress into one chapter the Ethical philosophy of Tirukkural in this study, Hence, I have utilized the maxims of Tiruvalluvar for the general study of Aram and left the special and intensive study of Kural for further research.

I have made earnest attempt to think out and follow as closely as possible along the lines of Tamil thought and tradition to explain and interpret the concept of Aram. In this study, the following points have been set forth for the first time to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(1) Definition of Aram as a way of life which aims at the principle of doing good to others.

(2) Various aspects and theories of 'good' in its specific relation to Aram

(3) The extant of Ethical literature before the days of Tolkappiyar

(4) The development of individual conscience as an important source of Aram.

(5) Historical explanation is given for the extant of a large number of ethical works in Tamil.

(6) The role of Aram as the supreme value of human life is elaborately discussed,

(7) The Practice of Aram for its own sake has been explained.

(8) The relationship between religion and ethics in Tamilakam during the Cankam and post Cankam periods.

(9) The identification of the 'Three stages of Ethical development' which the evolution of Ancient Tamil cultural in mountainous, pastoral and river-valley regions.

(10) Sociological interpretation of ancient Tamil culture with special reference to the customary morality of the primitive Tamils.

(11) The influence of the three unities viz. Primary entities (முதற்பொருள்), germinating things (கருப்பொருள்), and attributes (உரிப்பொருள்) in the moral life of ancient Tamils

(12) The characteristic features of Aram in the Age of Tolkappiyar

(13) The special traits of the moral conduct of the various classes and the emphasis laid on the self-realisation of man

(14) The concept of moral action as conceived by ancient Tamils.

(15) The gradual development of Aram in its several aspects during the cankam Age.

(16) The characteristic features of the Ethical Man of the Cankam Age.

For the sake of clarity, I have indulged in repetition of some ideas and even of some phrases and words. I have freely used the English renderings of Tirukkural by scholars Indian and European some of the verses of the Cankam literature translated by Dr.G.U. Pope and Mr.J.M. NallaswamiPillai duly acknowledged in the foot notes.

ABBREVIATION

A	**..**	**Akananuru**	*[அகநானூறு]*
Al	**..**	**Ainkurunuru**	*[ஐங்குநூறு]*
G	**..**	**Cillappetikaran**	*[சிலப்பதிகாரம்]*
K	**..**	**Kalittokai**	*[கலித்தொகை]*
Ku	**..**	**Kurntokai**	*[குறுந்தொகை]*
M	**..**	**Manimekalai**	*[மணிமேகலை]*
N	**..**	**Narrinai**	*[நற்றிணை]*
P	**..**	**Purananuru**	*[புறநானூறு]*
Pari	**..**	**Paripatal**	*[பரிப்பாடல்]*
Pat	**..**	**Pathupattu**	*[பத்துபாட்டு]*
Pati	**..**	**Patirruppattu**	*[பதிற்றுப்பத்து]*
T	**..**	**Tirukkural**	*[திருக்குறள்]*
Te	**..**	**Tevaram**	**[***தேவாரம்]*
Tm	**..**	**Tamil**	*[தமிழ்]*
Tol	**..**	**Tolkappiyam**	*[தொல்காப்பியம்]*

தமிழ் இலக்கிய வரலாறு

காலப்பகுப்பு

1. திணை இலக்கியக் காலம் (கி.மு.300-கி.பி.500)
2. அறத்துறை இலக்கியக் காலம் (கி.பி.200-கி.பி.500)
3. காப்பிய எழுச்சிக் காலம் (கி.பி.250-.350)
4. பக்தி இலக்கியக் காலம் (கி.மு.500-900)
5. காப்பிய மலர்ச்சிக் காலம் (கி.பி.900-1200)
6. சிற்றிலக்கிய வளர்ச்சிக் காலம் (கி.பி.1200-1400)
7. சிற்றிலக்கிய முதிர்ச்சிக் காலம் (கி.பி.1200-1600)
8. புராண இலக்கியக் காலம் (கி.பி.1600-1800)
9. விழிப்புணர்ச்சி இலக்கியக் காலம் (கி.பி.1800 - 1945)
10. மறுமலர்ச்சி இலக்கியக் காலம் (கி.பி.1945-)

As the script was drafted in the 60s, the present Orthography is provided for some important words.

Cankam	-	**Sangam**	-	[சங்கம்]
Canror	-	**Chanror**	-	[சான்றோர்]
Camanthar	-	**Sampanthar**	-	[சம்மந்தர்]
Caivite	-	**Saivite**	-	[சைவம்]
Cenkol	-	**Chenkol / senkol**	-	[செங்கோல்]
Cera	-	**Chera**	-	[சேர]
Civa	-	**Shiva**	-	[சிவா]
Cola	-	**Chozha**	-	[சோழா]
Cutamani nikantu	-	**Sudamani nikantu**	-	[சூடாமணி நிகண்டு]
Cuntaramurti	-	**Sundaramurthy**	-	[சுந்தரமூர்த்தி]
Cilappathikaram	-	**Silappathikaram**	-	[சிலப்பதிகாரம்]
Netunceliyan	-	**Nedunchezhiyan**	-	[நெடுஞ்செழியன்]
Pantiyan	-	**Pandiyan**	-	[பாண்டியன்]

****

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

(1) VOWELS

அ	ப	எ	e
ஆ	a	ஏ	ē
இ	i	ஐ	ai
ஈ	ī	ஒ	ŏ
அ	ŭ	ஓ	ō
உ	u	ஔ	au
ஊ	ū	ஃ	k̄

(2) CONSONANTS

க்	k	ர்	r
ங்	ṉ	ல்	l̲
ச்	c	வ்	v
ஞ்	n	ழ்	ḭ
ட்	ṭ	ள்	ḭ
ண்	n	ற்	r
த்	ṯ	ன்	n̄
ந்	n		
ப்	p		
ம்	m		
ய்	y̆		

PART – I
CONCEPT AND INTERPRETATION

CHAPTER-I
THE IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHICAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE TAMIL THOUGHT

"Geographical environment has a profound influence on racial characteristics. History is governed, if not determined by geography."[1] The development of human institutions has been very much influenced by the three main factors (viz.) Geographical environment, racial inheritance and social and religious conditions. The geographical environment moulds the mental characteristics. These tend to influence the formation and growth of racial character and thought...

Geographical environment affects people in many ways. A hot climate in general, depresses the vitality of the people and makes them indolent. People living in dry, hot climate are capable of great activity but cannot sustain it for long. The inhabitants of the cold climate have the ability for energetic and sustained activity.

The Tamil country appears to be a triangular block of very old rocks which covers its greater part from the Tirupati hills to the Nilgiris. This is "a typical plateau relief;its western edge is a steep brisk; the Western Ghats overlooking the west coast formed the narrow strip of rough wet low land; its surface has a gentle fall to a lower brink in the east. Between the Eastern Ghats and the Coromandel Coast, there is a belt of lowland which is much wider, smoother and relatively drier than the western strip"[2] The Tamil country is not endowed with a rugged coastline like Greece or Scotland even though it has been surrounded by the sea on the three sides."[3] From the Cape Comorin, the Western and the Coromandel coasts have extended over a thousand miles towards north-west and north-eastern parts of the Tamil land.

In ancient times, the peninsular India was known to the world as the Land of the Tamils. The modern Kerala State and the southern portions, of the Andhra Pradesh and the whole of Karnataka State Mysore were part and parcel of ancient Tamilakam.[4] The earliest

tradition fixes the boundaries of the Tamilakam as the Bay of Bengal on the East and the Arabian Sea on the West. In the north, Venkata or Tirupati hills separated Tamilakam from the Dekkan plateau. In the middle of the first millennium B.C., the southern boundary of Tamilakam was formed by a river called Kumari, which had been subsequently submerged into the sea.[5] From the beginning of the Christian era, the Cape Comorin is known as the southern boundary of this country. Tamilakam, thus constitutes almost an independent geographical unit by itself.

The natural boundaries of hills, seas and rivers largely determined the division of ancient Tamilakam into different political units, and the five-fold classification of the country into 'kurinji', the mountainous region, 'mullai', the forest region,'marutam' the fertile land around the river valleys, neytal', the littoral region,and 'palai', the sandy desert-like region.These natural divisions favored the growth of local and regional spirit and fostered a fissiparous tendency among the Tamils.

The physical features of the country have taken a major part in shaping the life and habits of the Tamil people. The history of the Tamil culture reveals that the culture of the Tamils have developed from savagery, passed through barbarism and reached the stage of civilization, gaining all the while an increasing degree of mastery over all the forces of Nature. A rich culture is impossible with a community of nomads, where people struggle for life and die from privation. Ancient Tamil literature bears ample testimony to the well settled Tamil society which provided security and leisure for thinking minds to blossom, for arts and science to flourish.

The valleys of the famous rivers Kaveri, Vaikai and Tamiravaruni were studded with flourishing seats of civilization from very early times. The absence of keen struggle for existence gave opportunities for intellectual pursuits. The diversity of landscape favoured a speculative bent of mind and the development of philosophical ideas. Both directly as well as indirectly the physical features of the 'Tamilakam' cultivated the spirit of tolerance among the people of this country.

The Tamil country was a wide but a limited landscape. The common natural boundaries induced a sense of common mother-land. The vision of a fundamental unity always loomed large and coloured the political ideals of the country,[7] which was rarely realized in actual practice. The cultural unity was however more manifest, being fostered by a common language, literature, social and religious ideals. In spite of the seeming diversity, there was a large measure of cultural unity and the goal of the practical union was never lost sight of this 'unity in diversity,' is the keynote of the tangled history of the Tamil country and forms the background for the social and cultural milieu of the country.

The Tamil country is situated in the tropical region. But the climate is neither scorching nor very chill. The climate of the country has been uniformly normal, throughout the year, though there are some exceptions in the summer. The climatic conditions of this country have induced the people to a love of ease and comfort and an addiction to the simple pleasures and luxuries so freely given by Nature. From the beginning of history, the security of life, the wealth of natural resources, the freedom from worry stimulated the life and activities of the Tamils towards the spirit of tolerance, love of wisdom and aspiration for the supreme values of life.

Reference:

1. *G. Grose-Hodge: Roman Panorama, p.13.*
2. *K. Ramamurti 'Some Aspects of the Regional Geography of Tamil Nadu - Article in Indian Geographical Journal, VOL. XXIII, No.2.*
3. *P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar: Pre-Aryan Tamil culture', p.21.*
4. *Tol. Prefatory Verse 1 - 3.*
5. *Tol. 1594 Peraciriyar's Com. 1355.*
6. *Tol.951.*
7. *C: Ka. 25, 11, 170-71.*

CHAPTER II
ANCIENT TAMIL LITERATURE

(a) Characteristic features of Cankam Literature

Ancient Tamil literature appears to have developed even before the Tamil people came into contact with the foreigners of far and near. It is, therefore, probable that the ancient Tamil classics are deep rooted in the native soil and blossomed as the finest flower in the garden of Tamil culture. "Both in substance and form" observes K.N. Sivaraja Pillai, "that these earliest warbling of the Tamil Muse are native throughout and do not bear the slightest tinge of the foreign influence."[1]

The 'fauna and flora of the Tamil country and the way of life led by the people formed the basis for ancient Tamil literature. The geographical environment and climatic conditions of 'Tamilakam' induced the people to play freely with Nature and to lead a simple and prosperous life. Ancient Tamils seem to have drawn their inspiration from Nature which is yet to be noticed in their wishful dreams and fancies embedded in the Cankam classics. The bards began to sing in their poems of the five fold natural regions and unconsciously depicted the conditions .of life in the five regions, and the peculiar customs developed there in response to the 'stimuli created by the geographical and climatic conditions.

Ancient Tamil literature is the treasure-house of great ideals, practical wisdom and the poetic imagination. It provides an amazing wealth of material concerning the social life of the Tamils and to a certain extent political conditions of ancient Tamilakam. The significant feature of ancient Tamil classics is, its intimate contact with the everyday life of the Tamils. They depict the life of the people with the background of the natural scenery. Nature seems to have formed the stage of literary conventions on which the human drama, i.e. the life of the Tamil people has been enacted magnificently.

The supreme aim of literature is to make men realize their individuality which would lead to the ultimate goal of the cosmic process i.e: the self-emancipation of the self.[2] Ancient Tamil literature reveals the incessant struggle of the Tamils for the fulfillment of the thirst of the spirit in them which craves for ultimate goal of human perfection. By directing all their energy and activities towards the realization of this end, they wanted to transmute the son of man into the son of God.

The ultimate goal of human aspirations can be achieved by leading a virtuous domestic life, quenching the urge of the inner spirit (in man) by gathering all the power of thought and losing the self in search of God. Thus they paved the way for the pilgrimage of Soul towards its eternal ideal along the path of 'pleasure", wealth' and virtue... The various stages of this great endeavour have been fully portrayed in ancient Tamil literature. From a perusal of the Cankam literature one can get a panoramic view of the romantic love, heroic exploits and egalitarian deeds of the ancient Tamils.

The life and activities of ancient Tamils were part and parcel of this great ideal. Hence it has been reflected in their literature. Ancient Tamil classics have been divided into two divisions as 'Akam' and 'Puram, poetry, which literally mean 'home' and 'outside the home', respectively. [This indicate the subjective and objective activities of man]. As in other literatures of the world, love and war are the main themes of ancient Tamil literature, which are called as 'Akam' and 'Puram'.

Puram has a wider connotation. It includes besides those of martial enterprises, social activities that involve an individual according to his status in the society. Even such activities bring out only the excellent characteristics of an individual, such as moral courage, chastity philanthropy, justice, truthfulness, gratitude etc.,

Ancient Tamil literature bears witness to the three stages of literary development which might have been the reflection of the evolution .of ancient Tamil culture. These three stages can be distinguished as:

(1) The Period of the Bards and Minstrels,

(2) The Poatic Age of Tamil literature, and

(3) The Philosophic Period of Tamil literature.

The Pre-Cankam period would have been the age of the Bards and Minstrels, the reminiscences of which are found in the Cankam classics. The period of the Cankam, the par excellence constitutes the Poetic Age of Tamil literature and the fag end of the Cankam period gradually ushered into the Philosophic Age of Ancient Tamil literature.

The term 'Cankam literature is very widely used to designate ancient Tamil literature produced prior to the third century of the Christian era. The word 'Cankam here stands for 'Literary Academy' and these classics are the products of the Tamil poets and bards who lived at a period when the activities of a literary body regulated and set the standards .for the development of Tamil Literature.

The persistent Tamil tradition, speaks of the three Tamil Cankams. The origin of the Cankam is itself shrouded in mystery. It has been believed that the first two Cankams were succeeded by geological upheavals which resulted in the submergence of the southern portions of the Tamil land into the sea. Almost all the precious products of the Tamil genius in those epochs have been lost in the limbo of oblivion. The only extant work of that epoch is Tolkappiyam. The other existing works are mostly the products of the Third Cankam. Hence, now Cankam in general means par excellence, the Third Cankam and the third epoch which is known as the 'Augustan Age of Tamil literature.'

Our knowledge of even the Tamil Cankam is very meagre and defective. We have to rely upon the available information direct and inferential to determine the probable age of the Cankam. With the help of the historical and literary evidences that are available, it is reasonable to conclude that the period between the fourth century B.C. and the third century A.D. is the probable Age of the Cankam, the par excellence.[2b]

(b) The Earliest Tamil Grammar

Tolkappiyam is the earliest Tamil classic - grammer. This book on Tamil grammar refers to the scholars and authors of that age who were authorities in Tamil language and literature, in more than one hundred and fifty places. Hence it is sufficiently clear that there might have been a large number of literature and centuries of literary culture prior to Tolkappiyam. It is not necessary to prove that grammar and poetics are possible only under the supposition that already poetry existed and that poetry is older than poetics. This is obvious from the composition of Tolkappiyam which frames rules for the various kinds of Tamil poetry.

Tradition places Tolkappiyam in the Age of the Second Tamil Cankam. Tolkappiyam is the greatest monument of the intelligence of the Tamils. It is one of the most ancient treatise on linguistics which has no parallel in the world except the Ashtadhiyayi of Panini. It has been of great importance not only for the study of Tamil language and the general trends of grammatical developments but also for the cultural history of the Tamils.

The first two parts of Tolkappiyam viz. Eluttatikaram or Orthography, Collatikaram or Etymology clearly explain the pattern and structure of the Tamil language. The first part 'Orthography' reveals that the ancient Tamil scholars had a clear idea about the origin of the various sounds of the Tamil language and were able to distinguish the characteristic features and changes of those sounds which are the basic principles of the phonology of Tamil language. The grammatical structure adopted in the formation of sentences, the constituent elements or parts of

the words, the declensions,conjugations, and changes in word formation and in their meanings have been discussed elaborately and precisely. Though it has been composed about twenty-five centuries ago, it still remains as a mine of several abstract and significant ideas of subtle linguistic facts which are admired and appreciated by the modern linguists.

The third part of Tolkappiyam is a rare and significant feature of the Tamil grammar which could not be found in any other language of the world. The grammatical works in other languages generally deal with the orthography, etymology, syntax, prosody and poetics. Besides these aspects,the subject-matter of literature has been discussed and defined thoroughly in the earliest Tamil grammar. The subject matter of literature as we have noticed earlier, has been distinguished into Akam and Puram.

'Porulatikaram', the third part of Tolkappiyam deals with the life and activities of the people in the first five chapters; then it explains the various phases of human psychology. Further it discusses the elements and requirements of the poetic composition. At last Tolkappiyam presents a synthetic data of the various literary usages and conventions that have become obsolete even in the days of its production. Tolkappiyam, thus stands as an embodiment of grammar, prosody, poetics, psychology and other aspects of Tamil language and literature.

(c) Cankam Classics

The period of the Cankam, the par excellence is known as the 'Golden Age of the Tamil literature commentators of Tolkappiyam speak of "Tokaium Pattum"[3] are popularly known as Cankam literature.Tokai is the anthology and this refers to the eight great anthologies viz. Ainkurununu, Kuruntokai, Narrinai, Akananuru, Purananuru, Patirruppattu, Kalittokai and Paripatal.

Out of these eight anthologies, Purananuru and Patirruppattu are 'Puram poety. The rest is Akam' poetry, except Paripatal which contains both Akam' and 'Puram' verses.

(i) Eight Anthologies

Purananuru or the Four Hundred panegyrics is a mine of historical information. From the poems of Purananuru we can get glimpses of the ancient Tamil culture, the aims and achievements: of the kings and the chieftains of the Cankam Age. They are the veritable magazines of ancient Tamil wisdom that are expressed in the form of dramatic monologues. The historical elements embedded in them are of immense help to reconstruct the history of the Tamil country. This anthology gives information about most of our ancient ideals of culture, war, social life and politics.

'Patirruppattu or the Ten Tens (of which only eighty verses are now extant) deals with Purapporul. It is an anthology of ten laudatory poems on the ten Cera kings. Each poem consists of ten verses, praising the heroic exploits, the benevolent and liberal attitude of the Cera kings. Every verse of Patirruppattu has been named after its significant and 'live' phrase used in it. Every poem contains a prefatory verse even though they are believed to be 'later interpolations, throws some more light on the historical events or achievements of the Cera kings.

'Ainkurunuru' is an anthology of the five hundred verses by five different poets of the Cankam age. This has been called as Five Centuries of Short Verses' which are composed in 'aciriyam' or what is known as blank verse. Here'kuru' represents 'short' and refers to the short dimension of these verses which do not exceed four lines. This anthology contains verses that represent the dramatic monologues of the lovers, their companions and the heroine's nurse. Ainkurunuru is divided into five parts and each in turn into ten divisions. Every division consists of ten verses having a similarity of beginning or a repetition of lines and phrases. They are addressed to parrots, peacocks, pigs and crabs etc.

'Kuruntokai' contains four hundred verses, ranging from four to eight lines each. Hence it has been called 'the Short Anthology'. This has been distinguished from 'Netuntokai' alias Akananuru, which contains poems of thirteen to thirty-two lines.

Another four hundred verses ranging from nine to twelve lines are brought together under the generic title 'Narrinai', i.e. the Good Anthology'. This name signifies 'good conduct' and suggests that it deals with the conduct of the lovers, their clandestine love affair and later their conjugal conduct in the married life.

'Kalittokai' reminds us the odes of English literature. Tradition calls it as "the anthology praised and cherished by the learned." Every ode contains an introduction, then its body of elaboration in three stanzas and finally its suggestive conclusion. This anthology contains one hundred and fifty odes which give a graphic account of the psychological attitude of the lovers in their everyday life. Analogies, allusions and maxims are profusely found in this anthology.

The last of the eighth, Anthologies is 'Paripatal'. In this anthology, various meters of Tamil poetry that give harmonious blending of various musical notes are used. In effect, it turns to be a musical composition. There are several instances of dramatic monologues' in this anthology. Paripatal contains graphic descriptions of the glories of the Pantiyan kings, the grandeur of the life of the nobles and the chieftains, and the splendor of the fine arts of the Tamil country.

According to tradition, Paripatal seems to have consisted of seventy long poems. But only twenty-two poems are now extant. Out of the twenty two six sing the glories of 'Tirumal', eight are invocations to the 'Lord Murukan' and the rest give the panoramic view of the famous river 'Vaikai'. Besides this, there are two other poems quoted in the commentaries of Tolkappiyam.

The last two anthologies are distinguished by their meters which are unique specimen of ancient Tamil musical composition. These Eight Anthologies are the expression of the intrinsic value of life in the poetic version.

(ii) Ten Idylls

The longer poems of more than hundred lines and more, sometimes going beyond seven hundred lines, are known in Tamil literature as.' Pattu' [பாட்டு]. Ten such idylls which still continue, the dramatic monologues of the earlier literary tradition have been compiled as 'Pattuppattu'.

Five of these poems belong to the class of composition known as "Arruppatai." Every poem of this class praises the patrons of art and literature and "showing the way" or "guiding the artist, a musician, a poet or a dancer in the way that will lead to the court of the patron. Hence it has been called "Arruppatai" or "Poetic guide"[4]

An artist who visited a patron and has received bounty at his hands returns home and on his way, he meets another artist along with his retinue. He directs him in the way, describing the way to the city of the patron, his country, his personal appearance, his love of art, his hospitality; his heroic exploits, his diplomatic attitude, his kindness and the reception that he would give to the artist.

The first poem of the Ten Idylls is Tirumurukarruppadai. Nakkirar, the author of this poem, guides the poet to Lord Murukan, God of the Eternal youth and Beauty. This has been known as the Mystic Guide" to God. The next poem of this anthology guides the actor or dancer to the court of the Chola king known as Karikalan. The poet "Mutattamakkanniyar" gives a graphic description of the Chola country, the valour and the munificence of this great king. The third poem guides the 'Minstrel of the Little Lyre' to the court of Nalliakkotan, the renowned patron of poets and artists. The poet "Nattattanar" of Nallurstates a series of virtues becoming of a good monarch and also refers to some social customs of the ancient Tamil society.

Perumpanarruppatai' is the fourth of this series. This poem guides the 'Minstrel of Large Lyre' to the court of Tondaiman Ilantiraiyan who ruled Kanci. The poet Urittirankannanar of Katiyalur directs the minstrel to Kanci by painting the

pen pictures of the flourishing conditions of Tontainatu and the life and activities of the Tamil people. The last poem of this anthology is also an Arruppadai which directs the dancer and the actor to the court of Nannan at Cenkan. This poem is called as "Malaipatukatam" or the "Sounds of the Mountain "These five poems thus give a vivid account of ancient Tamil culture.

The other poems of the Ten Idylls, excluding the sixth one, deal with the 'Akam' or the subjective themes of poetry. The lovers in each of these poems had their peculiar and appropriate states of mind and behaviour, governed by the environment. The Mullaippattu is popularly known as the 'Pastoral poetry'. It is composed by Napputanar. Mullai is the flower of the pastoral region which has been idealized as the symbol of chastity, where the loving, hearts forced to discharge their duties and then enjoy the pleasures of life. Mullaippattu depicts the union of the souls. in their common urge towards the realisation of the Self in man.

Netunalvatai, the seventh of this series is one of the greatest classics of ancient Tamil poetry. The title of the poem itself discloses the theme of the poem. Netunalvatai literally means the "Longdrawn North Wind" which is really a chill winter wind from the north in the winter season of Tamilakam. This poem narrates a graphic account of lovers in separation. In the midst of winter night, the pining queen out of her pangs of separation, feels despair and desolate. The king is out in the camp on a campaign, going around the camps and encouraging the .wounded soldiers in the battle-field. This king is identified with Pantiyan Netunceliyan, the victor of Talaiyalankanam. This poem seems to have flowed from the pen of Nakkirar, the stalwart among the poets of the Cankam Age.

The next poem is called Kurincippattu. It has been said that this poem has been composed by the famous poet Kapilarto inform and inculcate 'the message of Tamil' to an Aryan king called Prakattan. This poem attempts to explain the various obstacles and hardships in the path of the lovers.

Pattinappalai is the masterpiece of the Cankam poets.This poem describes Pukar, the great emporium of trade at the mouth of Kaviri. It gives a vivid account of the life of the people and the flourishing condition of the foreign trade in the Tamil country and narrates the great achievements and heroic exploits of the Cola king Karikalan, the great. Uruttirankannanar of Katiyalur have made a successful attempt in portraying the panorama of ancient Tamil civilization and culture. This poem depicts the pangs of separation, i.e. Palai, with a significant dramatic dexterity in the expression of the hero as. "Even if I am to get this great city of Pukar as a gift, oh! My blessed heart! I would not part with my lady love and go with you to accept it."[5]

The subjective poems of the Ten Idylls thus describe the happy union of the lovers brought together by their very loving hearts, and their pursuit of higher human values.

The sixth poem of this anthology is Maturaikkanei which seems to have specially composed by Marutan of Mankuţi to advise the valiant and young Pantiya king Netuncheliyan, the victor of Talaiyalankanam. The poet praises the king for his undaunted courage and the military exploits but persuades him to lead a life that will make him realize the higher values of life. The noteworthy aspect of this poem is the absolute absence of a single note of pessimism in elucidating the evanescence of the life. The poet persuades the king to live "a richer and nobler life inspired by high ideals a life that is deprived of no luxury but enriched by Truth, Beauty, and Goodness."[6] This poem describes beautifully the busy life and activities in the Mathurai city from the dawn to dusk. The poem abounds in poetic diction, casting vivid light upon, many old customs and habits of the Tamil society and giving fitting expression to the feelings and sentiments that have universal appeal.

The Cankam classics thus with great lucidity of imagination, directness of thought, felicity of expression, profound insight of discerning the nature of things and the elegance of verbal economy serve as a beacon light, and guide us to understand and appreciate the moral fervour of ancient Tamils.

We infact habitually admire and appreciate the poets of the Cankam Age, not only for the vividness and the intensity with which they have expressed the quality of life, but also for their depth of insight, the large ness or comprehensiveness of their understanding the coherence of their vision of life and sometimes even their grasp of the reality underlying the appearance of things.

The Eight Anthologies and the Ten Idylls never fail to portray the life of the people. They give us glimpses of social, economic and political conditions of ancient Tamilakam. They teach us a noble philosophy of life and conduct. They describe the moral life lived by the kings, poets, nobles and the demos of the ancient Tamil country. The Cankam literature disclose that the poets and minstrels on various occasions made successful attempts in preventing bloody feuds and internecine warfare, helped,, to safeguard the life of the princelings, gave counsel to the rulers on administration and diplomacy and restored the kings to the path of 'Aram', whenever they tended to go astray. There is hardly any exaggeration when we say that' the Cankam literature is the finest product of Tamil wisdom, which are overwhelmingly moral and secular.

(d) Tirukural

Philosophy is the pursuit of wisdom and includes the metaphysical enquiry into the nature of reality as a whole and the moral and spiritual endeavour to realise it. The pursuit of wisdom by ancient Tamils originated in their contemplations on the various problems of life. One can notice the germs of moral philosophy in the oracles and prophetic sayings of the Shamans like Velan (620), Akavanmakal [அகவன் மகள்] and Calini [சாலினி].

This stage gradually developed into the poetic stage of moral philosophy." In this period, the poets and bards gave instruction to the mass about the problem of the moral conduct and enunciated the philosophy of moral life.

Canror [சான்றோர்] the Ethical men of the Cankam Age were not only poets but were also great thinkers and radical humanists. They were revered by the people with great regard and affection. The people emulated the noble ideals and the philosophy of life propounded and propagated by the Canror. Every mother in ancient Tamil country eagerly wished that their sons should become Canror. In the midst of this congenial atmosphere, the masterminds of that age spent their whole life in contemplation and philosophical speculations.

This spirit of contemplation and philosophical speculation culminated in the Ethical philosophy of Tiruvalluvar. His masterpiece reveals the loftiest sentiments and the purest philosophy of life with equal power of conception and expression of the Tamil genius.

The poetic stage of Ethical development and the pursuit of knowledge ushered in the Philosophic period of Tamil literature. Tiruvalluvar, the world-renowned Canror of the Cankam Age, after patiently and persistently contemplating on the various aspects and problems of human life, gave to the world a full-fledged philosophy of life. Socrates is stated to have brought philosophy down from heaven to earth. We can daresay that the Tamil sage Tiruvalluvar discovered that heaven itself is on the earth, could one but realize it. The observations of Dr. Albert Schweitzer on Kural, deserves worth mentioning. He says that "there hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom as in Tirukkural."[7]

Tirukkural differs from the other Cankam classics in its composition and nature of the metre. It is not a cooperative endeavour of different poets that lived in different periods. Kural is the product of a particular individual who established his name and fame as a poet, philosopher and sage of the Cankam Age.

Kural has been included in the Eighteen Minor collections of Tamil literature. These works are not anthologies of various verses but collections of a series of poems by individual poets.Nalatiyar is the only exception to this. The term 'Eighteen Minor collections' first appears to have been used in the commentary of Tolkappiyam by Peraciriyar[8] who lived in the thirteenth century A.D.[9]and also in the commentary of Malyilainatar to Nannul[10]. He appears to have lived in or about the fourteenth century[11.]

From these evidences, it appears that the distinction or ancient Tamil literature into the Eighteen Major collections and Eighteen Minor collections have taken place even before the days of Peraciriyar. But it is significant to note that the other Eighteen Minor collections are found to be popular even in those days, whereas the Eighteen Major collections are known as "Tokaiyum Pattum" [தொகையும்பாட்டும்].

Pannirupattiyal' is the first poetic treatise that makes a classification of ancient Tamil literature into Major and Minor Collections. This work appears to have been composed by the author. He quotes three verses as authorities for his classification. So it is probable that this classification might have been prior to this author.

According to this source, the poems of the Major collections deal with the subjective and objective poetry, ie the internal workings of the mind usually known as love and with the external activities such as chivalry and heroism which are generally known as Akapporul and Purapporul. The metre used in these poems are Akaval, Kali, Vanci etc. which usually have fifty to five hundred verses.[12]

On the other hand the Minor collections deal with the three aims of human life, namely Aram (Ethics) Porul (Political economy) and Inpam (Pleasure). Here it appears the fourth higher value of human life is implicitly treated under the third category. The metre employed in this collection is ' Venpa' which is distinguished into Quatrin and couplet.[13]

Along with these details, the Pannirupattiyal adds the significant features of the Eight Anthologies, Ten Idylls, Tirukkural and other moral epigrams and asserts that these are the characteristic features that form the basis for the classification of Tamil literature into the Major and the Minor collections.[14]

It is important to note that this definition does not mention the number of works to be included or that are included in the each group. Hence we are inclined to think that this grouping of eighteen collections in one category might have come into vogue after the crystallized tradition of the Eight Anthologies and the Ten Idylls which together constitute the Cankam literature (that are eighteen in number). In order to distinguish this from the Minor collections, perhaps this latter group are also made equal in number. So it appears that the basis for the classification of ancient Tamil literature into Major and Minor collections might have been (based on the) metre and matter employed (in the collections).

It is appropriate here to quote Dr.G.U. Pope's view regarding the metre of these Ethical Works. He observes that "the metre of all gnomic bards is the venba ….. This metre is absolutely unique. The Tamil poets have not imitated Sanskrit, as those of other dialects of India have."[15]

A cursory glance at this ancient Tamil literature will disclose the most characteristic features of the Tamil literature. The noteworthy aspects of the Cankam classics, are its moral tone and secular nature that are expressed in verse. The Cankam poetry serves as a vehicle of profoundest thoughts on ethical principles and its practice. The observations of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore that, "Plato as a philosopher decreed the banishment of poets from his ideal Republic. But, in India, Philosophy never sought-alliance with poetry, because its mission was to occupy the people's life and not merely the learned seclusion of scholarship"[16] is found to be true even in the case of ancient Tamil literature.

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CHAPTER III
DEFINITION AND INTERPRETATION OF ARAM

(a) Etymological Implications of Aram

'Aram' is an elusive term that defies analysis and deludes definition. The term 'Aram' like certain other terms in the Tamil language such as Akam (அகம்), and Puram (புறம்)is very difficult to translate in other languages because of its strange and significant connotation. Even an explanation of this term is rendered difficult of account of the complexity or rather the pregnancy of its meaning. The Sanskrit word 'Dharma' is considered to be an equivalent term for 'Aram."

The term 'Aram' is derived from the root 'Aru' [அறு] which means 'to break off', 'to make way', 'to mould' and 'to sever.' The stem 'am' [அம்] represents the suffix of agency. According to this interpretation, 'Aram' implies that which severs or breaks the [spiritual] ignorance of man that springs from his evil deeds in previous births.

Aram is a word of protean significance. Ancient Tamils thought that Aram as morality, that sustains both the individual and the society. It is the code of life whether it leads to bliss in a life beyond or not, it is essential for the welfare and progress of the individual and society in this world. Humanity in general have diverse interests, various desires,conflicting needs which grow and change in the course of the development of complex institutions and organisations. The purpose of 'Aram' is to round them off into a most perfect system.

(b) Ethics and Morality

The subject matter of Aram is in quite harmony with the concept of Ethics. Ethics may be defined as the science of human character as manifesting itself in right or wrong action. The term "Ethics" is derived from the Greek word "Ethos" which originally meant customs, habitual conduct, usages and later denoted

character. Ethics is very often said to be the science of morals. The term 'moral' is derived from the Latin 'mores' which signifies customs or habits. But the customs and practices, particularly those of one's own group evoke, approval, hence "Ethics" and "Morals" have reference in one of their important uses to the things whether customs or conduct, motives or character, of which we approve as good, desirable;right, obligatory and worthy. Morality has been defined as a quality belonging to the manner or conduct of man which is very valuable for the social life. From this aspect of Ethics is considered to be a description of the moral sense in man; as the study of the Summum bonum or the Supreme Good; as a normative science that deals with the rules and standards of moral ideals and moral life.

(c) Various Aspects of Aram

Aram, on the other hand, has been used in eight different senses. Aram generally signifies (1) Virtue or righteousness in most of the Tamil literature. This concept of Aram belongs to the category of Ethics. Besides this, Aram also implies the following concepts:

(2) Custom,

(3) Justice,

(4) Duty,

(5) Moral merit,

(6) Charity,

(7) God of Virtue and

(8) Religious faith, a category of Theology.

In India, there was no clear distinction drawn between moral, and religious duty, usage, customary observances and law Aram has been applied to the whole of the complex forms of conduct that were established in the society. This kind of social convention is called as ‘Ethos' by the philosophers of the West. ‘Ethos'

represents the moral atmosphere as determined by definite rules and to a certain extent by current moral opinions, sentiments and practices. Hegel interpreted 'Ethos' as an expression of ethical principle at work in the Universe.[1]

But we must remember that it is often modified by the tastes and inclinations of the individuals, not merely guided by the moral considerations. The moral atmosphere of a community may be purified or vitiated by individual efforts and so, we see that 'Ethos' is not stationery but changing. Generally, the Ethos helps the development of our moral nature and leads to the moral progress. But at times when the moral tone is low, it may repress or pervert the moral progress.

Ancient Tamils distinguished between the dramatic conventions and the social conventions[2] which appears to have been based on the prevailing traditions of those days. They have laid emphasis only on the habits and customs of the great men. The learned commentator "Peraciriyar" has given the reason for setting the standard for the social convention, He explains that the convention is the custom observed by the great men. Why is it so? Because they are the masterminds of the society and so the world looks upon or to them for their guidance.[3]

Aram not only denotes moral conduct but also, represents all the basic principles of conduct and character of human beings. Tiruvalluvar treats Aram in this wider concept. In the first part of Tirukkural, Valluvar gives a graphic picture of the path that leads not again into this world and discusses the perennial problems of life with special reference to the householders and the ascetics. He also lays stress on the ways and means to attain the eternal bliss.[4]

Ethics of the individual is known as 'moral conduct' in common parlance. Ethical literature and didactic poetry deal with this aspect of moral philosophy. Tiruvalluvar analyses the various aspects of the individual ethics in the first part of the kural.

The study of the society on the basis of Aram forms the second part of the Kural. In this part Valluvar gives interpretation to polity and political economy, with its intrinsic ethical implications, and elaborately discusses the intricate problems that arise in the social life of the individual. The treatment of romantic love between a couples constitutes the third part of Kural which also belongs to the category of Ethics.

The earliest Tamil Grammarian Tolkappiyar gives a graphic picture of the various aspects of love. In this context, he emphasizes the important role of Aram in every day life of the ancient Tamils. He says "in the three objects of life viz. love, wealth and Aram, love comprises five stages"[4] In this aphorism Tolkappiyar enumerates Aram in the third place which is contrary to the usage prevalent among the Tamils. It has been the cherished tradition to speak of the supreme ends of human life as Aram, Porul and Inpam.

Ilampuranar, the earliest commentator of Toikappiyam attempted to explain the reason for this novel usage. He thinks that there must have been some significance in the order laid down by Tolkappiyar. He is of the opinion that all creatures try to attain pleasure which can be distinguished as the mundane pleasure and the eternal bliss. Eternal bliss can be achieved only by the ascetics. The mundane pleasure can be attained by the householders. The pursuit of pleasure can be attained by wealth.The pursuit of pleasure and wealth is a legitimate human aspiration, provided they are attained by strictly adhering to the path of virtue. If the ways and means for the pursuit of pleasure and wealth are par excellence, then, they will lead to the eternal bliss or beatitude. Having this view in mind, Tolkappiyar seems to have placed pleasure first, then the requirement of pleasure for the common man,i.e. wealth and then Aram in the third place, the underlying principle on which, the entire superstructure of human happiness can be built.[5]

In another context, Tolkappiyar expresses that Aram forms the first place in the Trinity of the supreme values of human life[6]. Hence it may not be a mistake to infer, that he has given the

prominent place to pleasure in the chapter that deals with the psychological background of lovers. Except this, there could not be any motive behind Tolkappiyar's novel usage of pleasure as the first constituent of the Trinity of higher human values.

It is apparently clear from his observations that the usage of the Trinity of the supreme values of life with Aram as the first constituent was a well-established fact even in the days of Tolkappiyar.

Ancient Tamils thought that every individual has in him the sexual instincts, love of power and wealth, desire for the common good and a hunger for the communion with the eternal Being. These different activities react upon and modify one another. They function in interdependence in man's life. If life is one, then there is one master spirit of life which recognizes the three supreme human values Aram or Ethics, Porul or Wealth and Inpam or Pleasure. This implies that ancient Tamils were under the impression that Aram is the source and life giving force for any and every activity of human life. It has been said that so far as the pursuit of power and pleasure is concerned there seems to be little difference between man and beast. Man is truly human only when he is devoted to the moral life. And he becomes divine when he uses the good life as the means for realising life eternal.

(d) Definition of Aram

They thought that Aram springs from a spotless, clear and pure mind, good thought, good word and good deed (used to) flow when the mind is clear and free from all base instincts. Then only, there can be free flow of good thoughts which are the source for all activities of human life. Valluvar states that the purity of mind itself, is virtue; all other things are mere pomp and empty sound.[7]

The hindrance to the springs of good thought in- human mind are enumerated as four. They are malice, greed, wrath, and harsh words. Annulling these four impediments in every walk of life is itself Aram.[8] In other words Valluvar defines Aram as cleansing of the heart.

The fruits of the evil deeds are contrary to goodness. Blame is the result of evil deeds. Hence we ought to do virtuous or good deeds; vice or evil deed is what one must avoid. This is the sum and substance of Aram.[9]

It is thus clear that the concept of Aram as conceived by ancient Tamils had its roots in good thought, good words and, in good deeds. The life of an individual would be a good life when he strictly adheres to these aspects of Aram. The attainment of pleasure and happiness by leading a good and virtuous life is superb and second to none. Valluvar has emphasised this profound truth as "A true pleasure is that which springs from Aram; and all else is merely pain and shame."[10]

Aram signifies moral merit which consists our results from practising virtues like temperance, charity sad compassion. Moral merit is the result of good conduct, Aram sometimes used to denote the rituals or religious rites in some of the later Tamil literature.[11]In this sense also, Aram implies activity which is the final goal of securing some personal good to the agent. But even here the idea of Aram necessarily pre-supposes moral goodness in its double aspects of devotion to social duties and the culmination of the personal virtues.

"Every good act is duty to those who have realised that is proper to seek perfection."[12] In this maxim, the term good [நல்லைவ] implies the concept of Aram. Parimelalakar interprets the term 'good' as Aram. He clearly explains this concept in another kural.

"One who never wastes a single day, does good to others, then it would be a stone that blocks the path of endless births.[13]

Parimelalakar says that goodness of nature consists in good conduct. A virtuous man must realize that it is his duty to be kind to others. The ultimate aim of Aram is to escape from the flow of births and deaths and to attain salvation. Adherence to the path of Aram alone can save man from the vicious cycle of births

and deaths. There is nothing more valuable for man than Aram. Hence it is desirable to encourage all methods that will break the cycle of births and deaths and promote the life along the path of liberation.[14]

There are a number of evidences in which 'nanru [நன்று]. 'nalla' [நல்ல] and. 'nanmai' [நன்மை] have been used in the sense of Aram.. In Ainkurunuru, a companion refers to the prayer and wish of a loyal wife. She tells the hero:

"Long live. Atan! long live Avini!
Let good increase and all ill cease
So dwelt our lady's thought"

…. A1-9.

The term 'nanru' in this verse occurs in the sense of Aram or the moral action which results in happiness. In Paripatal nallatu' [நல்லது] seems to have been used in this aspect of Aram. There is a specific reference to 'nallatu [நல்லது] in Puranānuru which clearly signifies Aram.[15] A poet appeals to the people that "those who have no interest in performing good acts, please abstain at least from doing evil deeds; that is the delightful wish of all. And also it is the way that will lead to the path of righteousness."[16]

From the above observations, it is sufficiently clear that the conception of Aram is a far-reaching one, and it seems to have embraced the whole life of man. We are inclined to think that ancient Tamils might have thought that doing good to other creatures as the basis of Aram. The consistent cooperation of the thought, speech and action will constitute the moral conduct.

Aram according to ancient Tamils is not a creed or religion but a way of life or a code of conduct, which regulates a man's work and activities as a member of society and as an individual and is intended to bring about the gradual development of man and to enable him to reach what was deemed to be the goal of human existence. This conception of Aram aims at the ideal of doing good to others by thought, word and deed transcending time and

space. In other words, Aram is the life-force that is embedded in the activity of man directed to secure the inner perfection of his own personality.

(e) The Problem of 'Good':

The concept of Aram as envisaged by ancient Tamils raises some controversial questions like "what do you mean by 'good'?" "what is “happiness'?" etc.. This is the fundamental problem of philosophy with special reference to Ethics which has not yet completely been solved. From Socrates to Russell, almost all philosophers have attempted to answer these questions. But yet they are in need of a simple and satisfactory explanation.

The term 'good' is derived from, German 'gut' which is connected with the root ‘gath' found in Greek as 'agathos'.This term means serviceable or valuable for an end.

(i) Plato's conception of 'Good'

Plato, in his 'Republic' discusses the various theories about the concept of good, which were in vogue during his time. A careful study of the remarkable speech made by Glaucon that opens the discussion in Book II of Plato's Republic, gives a clue to this major ethical problem. Glaucon makes distinction between the three kinds of 'good'. The first category is those that are good intrinsically, i.e. those that are valued for their own sake and apart from all consequences. The second kind of good is said to be those that are instrumentally." good i.e. things that are endured or suffered only for the sake of things, other than themselves. Then the third and last variety of good consists both intrinsic and instrumental values.[17]

According to Plato, human behaviour springs from the three main sources:desire, emotion and knowledge. Desire has its seat in the loins; it is a bursting reservoir of energy, fundamentally sexual. Emotion has its seat in the heart, in the flow and force of blood; it is the organic resonance of experience and desire. Knowledge has its seat in the head; it is the eye of desire, and can become the

pilot of the soul.[18] Plato's distinction of the soul into three parts may be summed up as the reasoning part, the part which is the embodiment of the higher and nobler emotions and the part which is made up of the appetites and passions.

These qualities and powers predominate in different people in different degrees. The general character of an individual's conduct will be determined by the activity of the predominating part of the three. The relation between three parts of the soul constitutes virtue, in which the base elements of the soul obey the superior. The superior element which we have seen is the reasoning part.

By establishing the relationship between these three parts of the soul, Plato proceeds to identify the excellence of the soul with "the Form" or the Idea of Good,' which is the source of all truth, all goodness and all beauty.

Plato's idealistic view is that "the world of which we are made aware by our senses is not the real world;the world revealed to sense perception, the world of physical things is, he held, compounded in equal degrees of reality and non-reality. Such reality as it possesses, it owes to the manifestation in it of what Plato called the Forms, the collection or assembly of which constitute what Plato meant by reality."[19].

In a famous passage in the Republic, Plato attributes to the Form of Good a position of pre-eminence among the other Forms. After an elaborate discussion, he comes to the conclusion that "the Good may be said to be the source not only of the intelligibility of the objects of knowledge, but also of their existence and reality; yet it is not itself identical with reality, but it is beyond reality and superior to it in the dignity and power.[20]

It is in this passage that Plato makes his grand affirmation about the Good, that it transcends even the real in dignity and power. The Republic establishes the unique value of spiritual, and moral goods. It considers the philosopher's life as the most enviable, as he is privileged to pass from knowledge until in his vision of

the good, he experiences the greatest blessedness which a man can possibly experience. Everything which advances him on his way, he considers as good; everything which impedes, him and takes him away from his goal, he considers it as evil; since all the so-called external goods, such as beauty, riches, strength of body, influential relations, will exert a detrimental rather than a helpful influence, it is in such a case they are not 'good'.

In 'Gorgias', Plato points out that the view that pleasure, being the final end, that all men do pursue and: cannot but pursue, is the supreme good. The only measure of the good, rests ultimately upon the hedonistic fancy. Then he expresses his view that, "good is the end of all our actions, and it is for its sake that all other things should be done, and not it for theirs."[21]

This clearly explains that the good is to be pursued not for the sake of pleasure, or for the sake of power, or for the reputation of virtue, or because honesty is the best policy. It is to be pursued, only for its own sake i.e. for its intrinsic value.

(ii) Aristotle's conception of 'Good'

Aristotle in the first book of his Nichomachean Ethics expresses that every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit seems to aim at some good. For this reason the good has been rightly declared to be that which all things aim at. He says that all human action has some end in view. This end may be the means to a, higher end which is the Summum bonum or the Supreme Good. He asserts that "if ….. among the ends at which our actions aim there be one, which we wish for its own sake, while we wish the others only for the sake of this, and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (which would obviously result in the process ad infinitum, so that all desire would be futile and vain), it is clear that this one ultimate end must be the Good, and indeed the Supreme Good.[22]

The Supreme Good, says Aristotle is Happiness, meaning by this that Happiness is the ultimate end to which all human activity is directed. By this, Aristotle frankly admits that the aim of life is not goodness for its own sake but happiness. His conviction is that "for we choose happiness for itself, and never with a view to anything further, whereas we choose honour, pleasure , intellect, because we believe that through them we shall be made happy[23] In this observation Aristotle seems to have expressed the moral realism.

(iii) Various Theories of 'Good'

Now we will consider the various views expressed by moral philosophers in explaining the concept of good. Good has been defined in terms of approval, by explaining the unique emotion or emotional attitude that we have when our attention is called for something ethically worthy and admirable. It means to suggest that something is right or good when it is capable of securing the approval of most people.

This view is open to objections on the obvious fact that seeking the approval of others in against the scope of moral end in itself. Every one ought to seek that which is intrinsically good or right is the moral dictum. So its not reasonable to seek the approval of the most people for the validity of any moral action.

David Hume maintained that the promotion of pleasure as good. According to him, the human mind is merely a bundle of consciousness can recognize no higher motive than the agent's interest or happiness, so that the noblest character is merely a means to an end – the promotion of pleasure.[24]

On the other hand Kant holds that there is nothing good but the goodwill, which is good in itself, not with references to any external facts. He informs that man as a rational being, is bound to obey a categorical imperative, the conduct of which is given in the formula: 'Act only on that maxim [or principle] which thou canst at the same will become a universal law.[25]

There is another definition put forward on the basis of biology. According to this view 'good' is said to the 'in conformity with evolutionary development.[26] Evolution in all cases could not be progressive and suit the needs and yearnings of humanity. So it is untenable to define good in terms of evolutionary development.

T.H. Green describes the 'common characteristic of the good is that it satisfies some desire. In all satisfaction of desire there is pleasure, and this pleasantness is in an object which is a necessary incident of its being good.[27]

Prof. Sidgwick has given a new interpretation to the concept of good. He as both in 'right' and in 'good' there is reference to a standard or ideal; but while 'right' emphasizes the compelling, prescribing power of that ideal, 'good' emphasizes its attractive power. Hence it we wish such a broad general definition, we should say that the good in all its senses is the desirable and the evil is the undesirable.[28]

This view of good is known as the psychological interpretation of good. Bertrand Russell proceeds further suggesting that 'an occurrence is good when it satisfies desire or more precisely; that we may define good as satisfaction of desire. One occurrence is better that another if it satisfies more desires or a more intense desire. I do not pretend that this is the only possible definition of 'good', but only that its consequences will be found more consonant with the ethical feelings of the majority of mankind that those of any other theoretically defensible definition."[29]

This may be true in some particular cases, but in general it is far from practice. Almost all people desire to have or endure one thing or other, There is no limit or restriction to desire. The quantum of satisfaction received for the intense desire may or may not please the man who is concerned with it. It seems that desire is incapable of satisfying man in all his aspirations. It is proper here to think over the famous maxim of Buddha: 'Desire is the root cause of misery." Hence it is clear that there would not be any satisfaction of desire. Until and unless every one has restriction or a limit to

his desire, we cannot concede with this definition and say that there is some grain of truth in it.

Modern moral philosopher, Prof.G.E. Moore asserts that the 'question, how 'good' is to be defined is the most fundamental question in all Ethics." After dilating upon the methods of definition, he observes, 'Every one does in fact understand this question 'Is this good?" When he thinks of it, his state of mind is different from what it would be when he asked 'Is this pleasant or desirable?' It has a distinct meaning for him, even though he may not recognize in what respect it is distinct. Whenever he thinks of 'intrinsic worth"' he has before his mind the unique object – the unique property of things – which I mean by 'good"'[30] Then Moore comes to the conclusion that the definition of good commits the 'Naturalistic fallacy.' By this he implies the tendency to explain the meaning of food by reference to particular modes of action or existences which may be more or less good, but do not enable us to see what is really meant by good.

G.E. Moore's view of good rests on his theory that good is not reducible to anything else. The terms such as good, right, happiness have recognized as value terms since they ascribe some positive value to the person or the things. The terms which ascribe value are called 'Evaluatory terms'. In philosophy, 'good' has been used with a specific meaning which signifies the characteristic feature of the term rather that its usage in the common parlance. So 'Good is the Janus – word par –excellence; it is often used to do more than one job on one occasion and the logical connections between the various jobs are what they are because the facts are what they are."[31] Hence when we say that a thing is 'good' we may mean either (1) that is intrinsically good or (2) that it adds to the value of many intrinsically good wholes or (3) that it is useful or has good-effects. So we can tentatively take it for granted that 'good' as used in morals, has a descriptive and an evaluative meaning, and the latter is primary."[32]

A thing is generally said to be good when it is valuable for some end. Good is also used to signify not something which is a means to an end, but something which is itself taken to be an end. From the foregoing discussions, It is sufficiently clear that which the possible exception of aesthetic objects, valuable on account of their beauty, a merely physical thing cannot be good in itself but only good as means. Besides this, good implies 'moral value or worth."[33] we are mainly concerned which the latter sense in the discussions of moral philosophy. At least we can define good in this sense which will be appropriate and reasonable in this domain of philosophy.

Dr.H. Rashdall expresses his view about the intrinsic value of goodness in describing his theory of Ideal Utilitarianism." "According to this view, actions are right or wrong according as they tend to produce for all mankind an ideal end or good which includes but is not limited to pleasure."[34] He implies by this, not the promotion of any particular value such as pleasure, but the promotion of all values which include moral goodness. Hence it is sufficiently clear that goodness is regarded as being an end as well as a means.

Now we are in a position to grasp the intricate goodness problems involved in the definition and interpretation of good. From the above observations, 'good' appears to be the embodiment of the instrumental and intrinsic values in which combination emerges the innate quality of moral worthiness. The various theories and conceptions of good revolves around this nucleus, giving emphasis and prominence to a particular aspect of these qualities in a particular context.

After having this rudimentary knowledge of Western philosophy, if we go through the ancient Tamil literature, it will be a surprise to notice the parallel views. The instrumental and intrinsic values of 'good' were well known to ancient Tamils. But they did not elaborately discuss them in any particular treatise. Without any theoretical discussions, the sages and seers,

philosophers and poets of ancient Tamilakam seem to have taken it for granted, that the concept of 'good' as the embodiment of intrinsic and instrumental values besides its moral worthiness. There is hardly any evidence for the existence of any separate school of thought in Tamilakam which gave instruction and illumination to this interesting problem of moral philosophy.

(f) The Tamilian concept of 'Good'

Ancient Tamils used to represent the concept of good by the word nal [நல்] which itself stands as the root for more than thousand words in the Tamil language. It has been very often used as an attribute or a prefix to a number of words which represent animate, inanimate, abstract and concrete things. The root 'nal' [நல்] itself gives the meaning of 'good or goodness'. When a suffix a [அ] is added to that nal+ a = nalla [நல்ல], it signifies the goodness of inferior [அஃறிணை] beings or things. By the process of adding a number of suffixes such as singular, plural, abstract terminations, Tamil vocabulary is very rich in having more than eight terms which are homonyms and also equivalents to the term' good'. They are nallatu [நல்லது] that which is good (singular); nallavai [நல்லவை] those which are good (plural), nalam [நலம்] goodness, nanku [நன்கு] that which is good, nanmai [நன்மை] goodness, nanri [நன்றி] goodness and nanru [நன்று] that which is good or goodness.

In the earliest Tamil grammar Tolkappiyam, the term 'nanru' [நன்று] has been defined as 'that which is great.'[35] Tolkappiyar uses the term nanmai [நன்மை] in three different senses. The term nanmai in one place means the 'good karma'[36]in another it implies 'good nature'[37]and in the third case it represents 'that which is useful or helpful'[38]The term nallavai [நல்லவை] signifies' things or deeds that are appropriate or which will give favorable results.'[39]

(g) The Values of Good

The terms which are used to represent 'good' in Tamil have also imply different shades of meaning. They are very interesting and useful in the study of the concept of morals, which reflect the

moral outlook of ancient Tamils. We can classify them into the following eight groups:

(1) Virtue, Goodness and Morality,

(2) Good and meritorious deeds,

(3) Kindness, Help, Benefit and Gratitude,

(4) Prosperity and approval,

(5) Utility,

(6) Nature or Character,

(7) Fame, and

(8) Beauty, Fineness and Excellence.

From the above list, we are able to discern which are 'Instrumental Good' and 'Intrinsic Good'. On this basis we can group' them into two main categories. The first group consists of (2) Good and meritorious deeds, (3) Kindness, Help, Benefit and Gratitude, (4) Prosperity and approval, (5) Utility, and (7) Fame, which are the characteristic features of the Instrumental Good.' The supreme qualities such as (1) Virtue, Goodness and Morality, (6) Nature or Character, and (8) Beauty, Fineness and Excellence constitute the 'Intrinsic Good.

Now we will discuss the various phases of 'Good' as conceived by ancient Tamils:

(i) Instrumental Value of Good:

(1) Good and Meritorious Deeds:

The motives which are actuated into deeds form the first place. In Kuruntokai, one of Cankam classics, the filial love of the parents seems to have been the motive which makes them realise that it is their duty to give their approval for the marriage of their daughter with the Hero, whom she loved with heart and soul. In this context, the parents have been praised as the persons who have made their[40] mind to follow the principle of doing good to others. A heroine of Narrinai delightfully praises her companion: "you have said that it is good, and by this you have

done a very good act.[41] In Kalittokai, a heroine admits her inability to find fault with her lover by discerning his good and evil deeds when she meets her sweet heart after a period of separation.[42] In 'Akananuru,a lady-love seems to have lost her hope of meeting her lover once again. Out of despair she doubts about the correctness of the old adage that 'who have done good deeds in this birth, won't endure any pain or entangle in any difficulty.[43]

In Purananuru, a poet advises the Cola king Nalankilli, "To avoid the friendship of those who assert that there is no good results from the good deeds and no evil effects rise from the evil deeds."[44]

(2) Kindness, Help, Benefit and Gratitude

The next important feature of Instrumental Good' is kindness, help, benefit and gratitude. A companion of a heroine persuades the hero at the time of elopement, to take care of her friend. She appeals to him by asking 'Is there anybody in the world, who did not take care of those who have done a great help to them'. By this she asserts that there is nobody who did not take care of the benefactors."Indeed it is the nature of the world. But you must take care of your sweet heart even in the time when she would be of some help to you."[45]In another context, the companion of the Heroine humbly requests the Hero when .he is starting to a far off place to acquire wealth not to forget the help which they have rendered to him until this day and persuades him to return as early as possible to marry her-heroine.[46]

In Tirukkural, there are a number of references to kindness, help, benefit and gratitude.

"The good a father can do his son is to make
him occupy the first rank in an assembly". -T.67.

"Favours bestowed in time of need, though
small, the spacious world exceed." - T.102.

"A help (which) looks as seed of millet small

who finds it counts a palm tree-tall." - T. 104.

"Forgetting the good is not good

Forgetting the ill at once is good" -T. 108.

"There is no escape for him who has killed the

benefit (Good) ....." - T.110.

"Even the falsehood may have the nature of truth,

If faultless good it can produce."- T.292.

"Never extol yourself,

Don't desire to do any deed that brings no good'. - T.439.

"In the presence of foreign rulers, who speaks briefly, avoids harshness, talks pleasingly so as to make them smile and thus brings good is fit to be an Ambassador." - T.685.

"Good men, expert in the usage of words, should

choose the occasion and speak what they have

well thought out." -T.712.[47]

The English renderings of the kurals are from the

Translations of Reverend Drew and M.S. Puranalingan Pillai.

(3) Prosperity and Approval

In Kuruntokai, there is a graphic picture of "old men with gray hair and sticks in their hands express 'very good, very good' in the midst of marriage negotiations at the bride's residence.[48]By this expression they convey their approval.

Tiruvalluvar feels pity for the ignorance of men and questions them "why do they enjoy happiness when fortune smiles at them, and bewail their evil in adverse circumstances?" In this couplet Valluvar seems to have used nanru in the sense of prosperity.[49]

(4) Utility

The usefulness or profit of good has been explicitly expressed in some of the verses. In Kuruntokai, by passers on their way happen to meet a couple in elopement. They at once identify the couple and recollect the good old incidents, in which the present lovers in their early days used to quarrel and amazingly gaze at their present state of love and affection. This reminds them the irony of fate, and they appraise the utility or the value of fate.[50]

In another verse of the same anthology, a heroine reproves the attitude of the hero by paying compliments to the river that flow aside as 'you are in a very good position, rather than the chief of the hills who have realized that it is good to have no love towards the destitutes.[51]

In Narrinai, there is a famous passage, which asserts that the "benefits of good will be accompanied by evil effects." In other words "An action which ends in good at one time may bring misfortune in some other time".[52]

There has been a belief among the Tamils which can be noticed even now, in the observance of the click of the lizard as a good omen when any one entangled in difficulty. In Akananuru, a Hero in the midst of his business, tour, feels sorry for his separation from his wife, and imagines how she would bear the pangs of separation and her pathetic attitude towards the click of the lizard. He thinks that whenever she hears the click of the lizard, she would appeal to the lizard with reverence and ask "tell me that which is good and useful to me."[53] By this omen she is very anxious to know whether her husband will return soon.

In Purananuru, a poet feels tenderly for the destructive action taken by King Karikalan in the country of his enemies. The poet after giving a pathetic picture of the country expresses his thrilling emotions to the king in a few words as that "there is nothing good in that country."[54] Tiruvalluvar observes that "a

favour done without any ulterior motive, if weighed, it will be vaster than the sea."[55]

(5) Fame

Nobody in the world is not interested in acquiring fame. The term nalam [நலம்] occurs in Tirukkural, which implies fame. Valluvar remarks that "those who are interested in spreading their fame of their own goodness will not desire the shoulders of those who rejoice in their arts display and bestow their despicable favours on all who pay."[56]

The noteworthy aspect of this analysis is that which gives clue to identify the various viewpoints which are expressed in connection with the definition and interpretation of 'Good,' by the western philosophers. The above observations reveal and represent the ideals of Aristotle, D. Hume, H. Sidgwick and Bertrand Russell which we have discussed earlier. From this discussion, we have a synthetic and comprehensive knowledge of the concept of 'good' in its instrumental value which is apparently clear and realistic.

(ii) Intrinsic Value of Good

Now we will turn to the idealistic concept of good which has been the crucial point for discussion and deliberations from the middle of the first millennium B.C. There is ample testimony to the existence of this school of thought in ancient Tamilakam. The various homonyms of good i.e. of the Tamil word 'nanmai' which make subtle difference in meaning in different contexts bear indirect evidence to this fact. We can have a clear idea about this from the following analysis.

(1) Goodness, Virtue and Morality

We have already discussed about the term 'nanru' which occurs in Ainkurunuru. It seems to represent first goodness and ultimately Aram or Virtue.[57]In Kuruntokai,'nanru' has been used in the sense of goodness. Nakkirar,the well-known poet for his undaunted courage and impartial criticism describes the

indifferent attitude of a Hero. The companion of the Hero rebukes him for his fascination and love towards a girl, who seems to have no knowledge about the goodness of love."5[8]

In Narrinai, the chastity of the Heroine has been signified as the 'Virtuous-chastity'.[59] A poet and lord of the manor of Alattur, praises the Cola king KilliValavan, expresses ingratitude as and the only unpardonable sin and blesses the king to have prosperous long life...

He says:

"Great king! I'm poor; but if the good
In this world done by men of worth endures
Oh may'st thou joyous live more years
Than are the river drops, shed by sweet-voiced clouds
That come wind-wafted from Himalaya's Height."[60]

Another poet happens to meet the Cola and Pantiyan kings together in one place with great surprise. He informs them about the utility of unity and advises them to lend a deaf ear to the supposed good and justifiable words of the scandal mongers who will attempt to break their friend ship. [61] Here 'good' presupposes virtue or righteousness.

In another verse of the same classic nallatu. [நல்லது] implies Aram which has been explained previously.[62] Kapilar sings the glories of Celvakkatunko valiyatan in Patirruppattu. He bestows his well wishes and blessings to him. He expresses that "If the world which has the curly waves of the roaring sea as its boundary exists by the effects of the good deeds done by great men,then you should also live for billions of years."[63]Here also 'good deed' suggests moral action.

The significant characteristic feature of ministers have been described by another poet. He says that "the ministers who adorn the court of the Cera king, have always borne in mind the comprehensive knowledge of good to look after the

administration,"[64] of the country in accordance with the ethics of polity.

Paripatal makes reference to Aram by the term 'nallatu' which has been explained elsewhere."[65]Timvalluvar seems to have used the word 'nanmai' [நன்மை] in the sense of Aram.

"All spirits homes of flesh as habitation claim,

And perfect virtue ever dwells with shame,[66] - T.1013.

The terms 'nanri' [நன்றி] and 'nanru [நன்று] also represent Aram in the following instances.[67]

"The cheerful word and kindly deed

To righteousness and merit lead". - T.97

"Who slay all virtues death among fly

Who obligations kill must die".- T.110

"That only will for virtue pass

Which fits itself to every class."[68]- T.111.

"Those actions should be given up

Which being neither good nor fame - T.652.

"The tact of them that are just, virtuous and benevolent

the world holds.(it) in (high) esteem." - T.994 [68]

"The world looked not down on the poverty

or the upright and virtuous man". - T. 11765

"Behavior good is virtues seed,

But endless griefs from ill proceed"-T.138.

"With no lost days for which' it atone

'Gainst threatening births it rears a stone." - T.38.

"Forgetting the goodness is not good

Forgetting the ill at once is good."[69]- T. 108 [70]

"Those who yield to the wishes of their wives
will neither relieve the wants of their friends nor
perform virtuous deeds." - T.908.
"Is there indeed a means of livelihood that
can bestow happiness on gamblers who gain.[70]
one and lose a hundred. - T.932 [71]

From these references it is quite evident that ancient Tamils had a clear idea about the moral values in life.[71]

(2) Nature or character

The term 'Nallan' [நல்லன்] in Ainkurunuru means 'man of good character'. A Heroine ironically remarks that "though she has no objection to admit that her lover as a man of (good) character, her emaciated shoulders reveal by their jaded appearance that he is a man of questionable character."[72]

In a rare occurrence of nanru [நன்று] in Tirukkural implies character. "The words devoid of profit or pleasure which a man speaks, will being inconsistent with virtue, remove him from goodness". - T.194.

(iii) Aesthetic Value of good

The abstract qualities such as colour, beauty, fineness and excellence are also represented by 'good' in its aesthetic sense. The aesthetic goods of the beautiful and sublime are recognized and appreciated by ancient Tamils. In ancient Tamil literature we come across other terms like 'worth, 'good', 'excellence' and 'perfection'. In order to avoid confusion, modern philosophy, prefers the term 'Value' to cover 'worth' and 'good'; and reserves the term 'perfection' to mean consummation of all values. Values have been distinguished into three types. Every object, every phenomenon and every event in the world has a value. Each of them is an integral part of the physical world, and if the entire universe is the self-expression of the Spiritual Reality, then things,

events and phenomena cannot but be experiences, and values through which the Spiritual Reality of the universe realises itself. Again if our lives as individuals mean creation and overcoming of antithesis between ourselves and the physical world, and the entire social environment, it is obvious how the physical world has a value as contributory to the attainment by us of higher values as individuals. Hence every object, every phenomenon, every event in this physical world has been called "Physical Values."

The second type of 'Value' is known as 'Economic Values.'In our life of ordinary experience there is a side which demands exchange of goods between ourselves and our fellow-beings. We are in need of many things which we do not possess, but our fellow-beings do, and they need many things which they do not possess. This necessity is felt for exchange of goods among the members of the human- society to meet each other's needs. Therefore the goods which can be secured in exchange for other goods have the Economic Value' or 'Value in Exchange,'

We are concerned only with the Psychical Value which has been considered as the supreme Value. Psychical Values are those higher Values which the self of the individual develops as ideals corresponding to its three physical functions, namely, thinking, feeling and willing. The psychical values lays stress on the operation and development of the special psychical functions towards their corresponding ideals. Intellectual value or Truth, Ethical value or Goodness and Aesthetic value or Beauty constitute the Psychical Value'

The concept of good as we have seen earlier also represents the Aesthetic Value. The main characteristics which distinguish a beautiful object are its (1) Symmetry, (2) Unity and (3) Universality.

A beautiful object is characterized by the Symmetry of its parts. A thing which is beautiful exhibits a definite proportion in the form and structure. Symmetry may assume different forms in different things of beauty.

Secondly, a beautiful object is characterized by Unity. Unless a beautiful object is one unified whole, the mind which perceives it cannot appreciate it but feels distracted which mars its sense of beauty. A thing of beauty usually consists the unity of form and the unity of matter.

The third characteristic of a beautiful object is Universality. Individual liking and attraction do not constitute the feeling of the beauty. The object of beauty has an appeal to the higher faculty of imagination which is super sensuous and, therefore, above the particular and variable character of sense-feeling and thus compels appreciation from all minds. The last characteristic of a beautiful object is disinterestedness. This characteristic follows as a corollary from the universality of beauty. Disinterestedness implies that the contemplation of any beautiful object must not have any particular interest of the individual who perceives or contemplates. The beauty of an object is contemplated and enjoyed for its own sake. It is an end in itself and never a means to an end, and therefore it is an intrinsic value by itself. We have to bear in mind that the individual interest which is at the root of extrinsic value have nothing to do with the beauty of an object.[73]

The foregoing study of beauty throws some light on the conception of 'good' as perceived by ancient Tamils. They have noticed that lustre of the eyes that adds to the beauty of a lady. A poet describes the loss of lustre in the eyes of a heroine through love-sickness as the good lady's eyes have turned into good'.[74] In this, the first 'good' signifies the lady's character and the second 'good' implies the loss of lustre. The pangs of separation makes another heroine sallow or pale. This change of complexion has been expressed by that heroine as 'I have lost my old goodness and immersed into the unbearable sufferings of separation.'[75]. Here the term 'good' represents the fair complexion of the lady.

There are also some other references to 'good' which implies merely colour'[76] and red colour'.[77] Apart from these, there are some rare usages of 'good' in Kalittokai. Good' is used in the sense of ' heaven'[78] The term 'good' also means hope and faith in one of the maxims of Valluvar.[79]

(iv) Ethical Value of 'Good

We are thus able to define and describe the concept of good as envisaged by ancient Tamils. From these literary evidences, it appears that the ancient Tamils had a clear idea about, the ethical value of 'good'.The characteristic feature of ancient Tamil thought is its synthetic approach to the problem of 'good'. They realised the significant aspects of good which are inseparable, but vary in inverse ratio. Even Tiruvalluvar, the idealistic philosopher of Tamilakam lays emphasis on both the aspects of 'good.' Hence, it is probable that the ancient Tamils might have thought that the intrinsic value as the spirit and the instrumental value as the body of 'good'. But they had noticed a significant or a unique ethical value that emerge in the union of intrinsic and instrumental value of good.

They were under the impression that the individual in his relation to other individuals would find that his own will stands in antithesis to the will of otherselves and also that his will is in conflict with his desires, impulses, and instincts which stand in the way of his development as a personality. He finds that the social will imposes certain restrictions on his own will, and also that under the stress and strain of his instincts and impulses, his will is distracted and torn as under, with the result that he is at a loss to discern what must be the summum bonum or the highest good or his life. Sometimes he thinks as if the social good or the good of the community is his highest ideal, and sometimes his own individual happiness to the exclusion of the happiness of others is his summum bonum; or even some times he finds as if his will under the exclusive guidance of reason to the neglect of his sensible life that promotes his life's end.

But he is ultimately enlightened when he realises that the true ethical ideal did not lie in the separation between his own will and the social will, nor in his purely rational will or his purely sensuous will, but rather in the organic development of his will which is a will among wills and is an integral whole of the sensuous and the

rational will. The ethical life is not a cross-section severed from the social context and from the organic whole of its own being, so that its ideal or goodness is a complex product of the social and individual forces at work. This kind of Moral Goodness is called 'Eudoemonia' by Aristotle which means beatitude'.

Moral goodness is thus the ideal of development which results from the harmony and interplay of all the physical forces, through which physical centre realizes itself as a concrete individuality. In this deliberation, the conception of human nature appears perfectly sound; both the concept of good and the ideal of Aram seems to have a natural basis and everything thus natural has an ideal development.

The whole material and moral universe with which the individual has to deal in this world is, thus divided by the Tamils into three big realms viz. Aram, Porul and Inpam;[80] and the management and conduct of his social and individual life is conceived and formulated in terms of these three with reference to the ultimate end, of life,viz. Vitu, which is also represented by Inpam on the earlier period, but later on it has been distinguished as a separate category.[81]

Reference:

1. Findlay, J.N.: Hegel, A Re-examination, p.318.

2. "நாடக வழக்கினும் உலகியல் வழக்கினும்
பாடல் சான்ற புலனெறி வழக்கம்" - Tol. 999.

3. "வழக்கெனப்படுவது யர்ந்தோர் மேற்றே
நிகழ்ச்சி அவர்கட் டாகலான்" - Tol. 1592.
Peraciriyar's Com. Porul P. 1348.

4. 'இன்பமும் பொருளும் அறனு மென்றாங்கு
அன்பொடு புணர்ந்த ஐந்திணை மருங்கிற்
- Tol. 1038.

5. Tol. Porul. Ilampuranar's com. p. 160.

6. அந்நில மருங்கின் அறம்முதலாகிய
மும்முதற் பொருட்கும் உரியவென்ப"
- Tol. 1363.

7. T.34.

8. T.35.

9. T.35. Kalinkar's com. p.37-38. Kural Uraikkottu. Part I

10. T.39.

11."தொன்மாண்பமைந்த புண்நல்லந் துன்னிநின்ற"
- Civaka cintamani

12. T. 981.

13. "வீழ்நாள்படா அமைநன்றாற்றின் அஃதொருவன்
வாழ்நாள் வழியடைக்குங் கல்"
- T.38

14. T.38. Parimelalakar's Com. p.40. (Uraikkottu, Part 1)

15. "நல்லது வெஃகிவின் செய்வார்" – Pari 10:88

16. "நல்லது செய்தலாற்றீராயினும்
அல்லது செய்தலோம் புமினதுதான்
எல்லாருமு வப்பதன்றியும்
நல்லாற்றும் படூஉநெறியுமாரதுவே" - P. 195

Reference is also made in: Ku. 78,115, 225 and 374; N: 24, 188 & 330; K.:142; A.: 101, & 119; P.: 71, 29, 34, 58, 106 and 195; Pati.: 63 and 72.

17. B. Jowett: The Dialogues of Plato - p.270-72.

18. Ibid.pp.334-336.

19. Joad, C.E.M.: Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics Pp.57-58. London. (1948).

20. B. Jowett: The Dialogues of Plato, pp.378-379:

21. Ibid. p.198.

22. Aristotle: Nichomachean Ethics, Translated by W.D. Ross. I, ii.1.

23. Ibid: i-7

24. Hume, D: A Treatise of Human Nature; p.602

25. Kant, E: Critique of Practical Reason and other works, p.46.

26. T.H.Huxley and J.S.Huxley: Evolution and Ethics, pp.12-33

27. T.H.Green: Prolegomena to Ethics, Oxford, 1899, p.201

28. H.Sidgwick: Methods of Ethics, p.100, London, 1901

29. Bertrand Russell: HumaSociety in Ethics and Politics. London, 1954. p.55

30. G.E.Moore: Pricipia Zthica, p.183

31. Nowell-Smith - Ethics, p.167

32. R.M.Hare: The Language of Morals, p.146

33. "...this means that the end or ideal in morals is not to be conceived of as "some far-off divine event" which is some day to come to pass. It is daily and hourly realised in the good not itself. Such an act is not a means to a further end. is itself the end. In its completeness (the purity of its motive, the beneficence or the satisfyingness of its results) the end is realised. The good is not some thing to be hereafter attained; it is attained something to be hereafter attained; from moment to moment in the good life itself"

...Muir Head; Elements of Ethiq pp.202.

34. H. Rashdall: The Theory of Good and Evil, p. 184:

35."நன்று பெரிதாகும்" - To1.826

36. "நன்மை தீமை அச்சம் சார்தல்" - Tol.982.

37. "நன்மையும் தீமையும் என்றிருதிறத்தால்"- Tol.996.

38. "நன்மையும் தீமையும் பிறிதினைக்கூறலும்" - Tol.1156

39. "நல்லவை உரைத்தலும் அல்லவைகடிதலும்" - Tol.1099.

40. "நன்றுபுரி கொள்கை" Ku. 374.

"செய்ந்நன்றி அறிதலும்" - Pat: 3. 207.

41."நன்றெனப் புரிந்தோய் நன்று செய்தனையே" -N.24.

42. "நன்றுதீ தென்று பிற யான் காணேன்" - K.142.

43. "நன்று செய்மருங்கில்தீதில் லென்னுந்
தொன்று படுபழமொழி." - A.101

44. நல்லதன் நலனும் தயதன் தீமையும்
இல்லை யென்போர்க் கினனா கிலியர்" – P.29
45. "பெரு நன்குற்றிற் பேணுரு முலாரோ
ஒருநன் றுடைய ளாயினும் புரிமாண்டு" – Ku.115
46. "நன்றி மறந்தமை யாயாயின்":- Ku.225.
47. The English renderings of the kurals are from the
Translations of Reverend Drew and M.S. Puranalingan Pillai.
48. "நன்று நன்று என்று மாக்களெர்கு" - Ku. 146.
49. "நன்றாங்கால் நல்லவாக் காண்பவர்"…… - T.379.
50. "நல்லைமன் றம்மபாலே" - Ku. 229,
51. Ku. 327
52."நன்றி விளைவுந் தீதாகுவருமென்:- N. 188.
53. Ai. 289.
54. "…….. நல்ல
இல்ல வாகுபவால் இயல் தேர்வளவ!" P.7.
55. T. 103
56. T.916
57. Ai.9.
58. Ku.78.
59. N.330.
60. Dr.G.U. Pope's Translation of Purananuru, St.34.
Vide Two Thousand years of Tamil literature, p.9.
In this rendering "rain drops" may be more
appropriate than "the river drops."
61. "அதனால்நல்லபோலவும்நயவபோலவும்,
தொல்லோர் சென்றநெறியபோலவும்" - P.58
62. P.195.
63. "நனந்தலையுலகஞ்செய்தநன்றுண்டெனின்" - Pati.7:3.
64. "நன்றறியுள்ளத் துச்சான்றோ ரன்ன" – Pati.8:2
65. Pari.10:8.
66. Dr.G.U. Pope's Translation.
67. Kural 97, 110 and 111- Translation of Robinson in the "Tamil Wisdom".
68. Tirukkural Uraikkottu - Vols. I & II
69. Ibid.

70. Robinson's Translation of Kural.

71. Drew's Translation of Kural."

72. Ai.11.

73. Knight, W: The Philosophy of the Beautiful Part I.pp.120-160.

74. "நல்லவாயின நல்லோள் கண்ணே" - Ai. 166.

75. "தொன்னலந் தொலை பீங்கியாந்து யருழப்ப" - K.16.

76. "செயலையந் தளிரேய்க்கும் மெழினலம்" – K.15

77." நலம்பெறு கலிங்கத்துக்குறங்கின்மிசை" – Pat I:109

78. "வாள்வாய் நன்றுயினு மஃதெறியாது விடாதே காண்" - K. 149

79. "பொது நலத்தார் புன்னலம்தோயார்" – T. 915

80. "அந்நிலை மருங்கின் அறமுதலாகிய
மும்முதற் பொருட்கும் உரியவென்ப" - Tol.1363

"இன்பமும் பொருளும் அறனும் என்றாங்கு
அன்பொடு புணர்ந்த ஐந்திணை மருங்கின்" – Tol. 1038

"மூன்றன் பகுதியும் மண்டிலத் தருமையும்
அறனும் பொருளும் இன்பமுமூன்றும்" – P.28

"சிறப்புடை மரபின் பொருளும் இன்பமும்
அறத்து வழிப்படூஉம் தோற்றம் போல" – P.31

81. "அறம்பொரு ளீன்பமென் றம்மூன்றி னென்றனை"81– K.141
ஆலதன் கீழிருந்து
"நால்வர்க் கறம் பொருள் வீடின்பம் ஆறங்க வேதந்
தெரித்தானைத் திருநாகேச்சரத்துளானை" – Te.6905

CHAPTER IV
THE SOURCES OF ARAM

Aram has for its function the ordering of life and the guidance of action. It sits at the healm and directs our course through the changes and chances of the world. The force of thought that springs straight from the experiences of life is shaped in accordance with the 'ethos' and 'mores' of the society.

The basis of the ancient Tamil Society was a sort of realistic empiricism. The philosophy of life propounded and propagated by the ancient Tamils seems to have been in quite harmony with the habits and customs of their every- day life. There was no partition-wall between the spiritual' and 'secular' in the thought of the ancient Tamils: These two phases of the Tamil thought are wonderfully blended together into a harmonious whole. What we can cite as the sources of Aram, are the ideals, traditions and practices of the people in the palmy days of the Tamil culture. The sources of Aram can be classified as:

(a) Aranurkal or Ethical codes,

(b) The Tradition and Practice of the Virtuous men (the Sages and Seers) who knew it,

(c) The conduct of the Virtuous men, and

(d) Individual conscience.

These four sources of Aram have formed the basis for the development of the Ethical philosophy of the ancient Tamils.

(a) Aranurkal

Of the four sources of Aram, Ethical codes or Ethical literature is considered to be the main source of Aram in all countries. Tirukkural' is the earliest and the ancient Ethical literature extant in Tamil. The other Cankam classics are not pure ethical literature.

There is no treatise in Tamil except the 'Sacred Kural' which can be compared with Aristotle's 'Nichomachean Ethics or with

the Sanskrit Dharmasastras. But a careful study of the Cankam literature reveals that there might have existed Ethical literature of high repute in Tamil, even before the composition of Tirukkural.

Tolkappiyar refers Aranurkal by the term Ottu [ஒத்து] which denotes both Vedas and Dharma sastras."[1] In describing the various kinds of treatise in Tamil, Tolkappiyar defines and describes the Primary Treatise [முதனூல்] as a book written by the Master-minds who were free from virtuous and evil deeds.[2] This implies that the Master-minds may be the sages and seers or the poets and philosophers. They might have been enlightened by the divine wisdom or by revelation.[3]

In the later period i.e. in the Age of Alvars and Caivite Saints, the devotees of Civa a visualised the Mastermind as the Supreme God Civa. They identified Lord Civa with the great and Unique Preceptor of Divine Wisdom to the sages. This great Preceptor or Guru is known as 'Daksinamurti'.This kind of identification is not new to the Tamils.Even in the Cankam Age, Lord Civa is known as the Lord of the banyan tree. It is a significant fact to note that there is hardly any occurrence of the term Civa in the Cankam classics but, the terms 'Al amar celvan'[4]'Al kelu katavul'[5] and 'Al amar katavul'[6] have been used very often to denote Lord Civa in ancient Tamil literature.

"In the age of Tevaram, this cult of Daksinamurti, as the cult of the great teacher of Yoga, Jana and of all kinds of learning and Arts, seems to have become fully developed. If Nataraja represents the bliss of the Absolute, Daktinamurti represents the knowledge aspect as unperturbed peace and silence."[7]

In the spontaneous outpourings of the devotional hearts of Appar, Campantar and Cuntaramurti, there are a number of reference to the teaching of the Lord. Campantar tells that the Lord Dakshinamurti explained the subtle thought of the Vedas along with Aram to the four sages.[8] Appar speaks of the Lord expounding the sublime thoughts of 'Aram', 'Porul', 'Vitu' and 'Inpam' along with the Vedas to the four sages.[9] Thus it has been crystallized into

a tradition, that God as the Guru who gave instruction to the sages and seers. But in the extant Cankam literature there is hardly any direct evidence for the ancient Tamil society being bestowed with any revealed scriptures to establish the ethical and moral codes. Hence it appears from this source that during the Golden Age of Tamil literature, the poets have played the role of the Preceptors of morals.

Tolkappiyar gives a clue to the prevalence of the scriptures in Tami1. He says that the mantras the Prophetic utterances of the mighty men whose words are pregnant with meaning.[10]In the same manner, Valluvar speaks of the greatness of the sages. He says that 'the greatness of the sages is revealed in this world by their prophetic utterances.'[11]

Tolkappiyar describes the eight fold poetical facade [எண்வகைவனப்பு] in 'Ceyyuliyal'.He defines ammai [அம்மை] as "agreeable succession of short soft words in verse of not more than five lines, having a soothing effect."[12]These characteristic features are found only in the Eighteen Minor Didactic Works' which have been referred as an example for this variety of literature by the three chief commentators of Tolkappiyam.[13]

But they could not quote any verse or refer any work that belongs to the age of Tolkappiyam. It is quite evident that, there might have been in vogue, some kind of ethical literature even in the days of Tolkappiyar, from which he seems to have framed the rules and formed definition for this aspect of poetical facade.

In ancient times even before Tiruvalluvar,there were well versed scholars in the sciences of Ethics and Polities. Valluvar describes the greatness of those scholars in the third chapter, who were well known as sages and seers. In one of his maxims, he exhorts us to divide one's bread with the needy and protecting all the creatures are the greatest of all the commandments of the moral philosophers"[14]of the ancient world. We can interpret the commandments of the moral philosophers as reference being made both to the native and foreign scholars. Besides this

evidence, there are a large number of references,[15] in Kural to the Ethical codes, of which the following deserves to be mentioned here:

"Death rather than life will confer
upon the deceitful backbiter the
profit which the treatises on Aram
point out."[16]

We can cite similar evidences from other Cankam classics. Purananuru explicitly refers to the Ethical code in the following verse:

"Whatever sins men do in hunting kine -
All heinous crimes and wrongs to Brahmans wrought
Where fault is pondered and confess't - a place
May yet be found to wash away the strain,
But they who benefit conferred have slain
Can never escape - so virtues self hath sung
O spouse of her with jewels rare adorned."[17]

The old commentator of Purananuru thinks that the term 'Aram' (Virtues) used in this verse indicates at realistic on Aram.[18]There are plenty of evidences which also help us to establish the existence of Ethical literature in Tamil during the Cankam Age."[19]But they might have met the fate of other Cankam classics that have lost in the limbo of oblivion.'

Tirukkural is the only basis or, the main source for the study of the Ethical ideals of ancient Tamils. Nevertheless, the other Cankam classics viz. Tolkappiyam, Ten Idylls and Eight Anthologies are of great help to us. Though they do not give a systematic treatment of Aram, they indicate the ideals and prescribe certain practical rules and commandments as distinct from the instances of Conduct. It is very difficult to distinguish between Gnomic poetry' and 'Didactic poetry in the Cankam literature.

Tamil literature of the later period is very rich in having plenty of Ethical literature. Most of the poems in Tamil are didactic in tone. Though there appears a religious 'bias' in the later Tamil literature, they are full of Ethical maxims and moral precepts.

The abundance of Ethical literature in Tamil have led some scholars to "think that the existence of so many works on the ethics of the daily life is an indication of the low state of morality among the early Tamils."[20]

An objective and impartial critic must not fall victim to the pre-conceived notions and prejudiced ideas. First of all the critic should have made an earnest attempt to understand the true spirit of the ancient Tamil culture.

Ancient Tamil people had a quest for perfection. In their pursuit of perfection, they have attempted to organise the things of the body,the mind and the soul into a whole. They seem to have made several attempts to interrelate the activities of the human spirit, the artistic and ethical, the religious and rational into a perfect system. They thought that man is a miniature of the universe he lives in. They pondered on the ways and means to achieve the spiritual liberation. The spiritual goal and the ethical means are inextricably interrelated. The moral law within human beings is the evidence of their citizenship in the world of spirit. Moral discipline makes room for spiritual insight. The relationship between the moral and spiritual is not adventitious. To reach the goal of liberation is to perfect, the means to it. Their philosophical speculation forced them to insist on ethical conduct as an inseparable means for the spiritual life.'Aram' according to the ancient Tamils is the basis for the spiritual life and its substance.

During the Cankam Age, there were a large number of itinerant sages and seers. They were known as Aravor [அறவோர்] and Arivar [அறிவர்]. They were erudite scholars well known for their penetrating insight. They were the embodiment of tenderness, gentleness and compassion. Their words were great strength

and solace to those who were in the hour of need', despair and distress.

'Arivar' were the great seers, capable of knowing the past, present and the future."[21]They had a keen interest in the welfare and happiness of all sentient creatures. They used to direct people in the right path to lead a happy and virtuous life. They delightfully instructed and inculcated the ideals of Aram to the people, and also prevented them from evil deeds."[22] The house-holder shad a great respect and reverence for the Arivars. Whenever the householders shirked their duties and responsibilities, the Arivars never failed to rebuke and reprove them. They were friends, philosophers and enlightened guides to the people who sought their help. Every one listened to the teachings of Arivars with great adoration."[23] Though all the Arivars were not ascetics, some of them occasionally used to beg their daily bread.[24] Their sayings were known as Porumolikkanci [பொருண் மொழிக்காஞ்சி]24(a)

The maxims of Arivars, were very often regarded as gnomic by ancient Tamils. Those gnomic were passed on to the posterity by the elders and the great men. Whenever circumstances arose, the men of wisdom used to remind the good old maxims and adages. In course of time, the poets and bards gave a new shape and form to these gnomics. They composed poetry," the aim of which was less to excite the hearer by the passion or move him by pathos, than to instruct his mind and improve his morals."[25] This kind of poetry is called as Didactic poetry. In ancient times Didactic poetry was an easy instrument by which information could be made attractive to the ear and be retained by memory.

Tolkappiyar defines Gnomic poetry [முதுமொழி] as 'pithy says with subtle meaning, expressed in simple form (generally in verse) embodying some moral sentiment to fulfill its aim.[26]From this account of the Gnomic poetry and Naccinarkiniyar's explanation to this sutra, we can daresay that the sayings of the great men were preserved in the form of Gnomic literature in ancient Tamilakam.

So it is reasonable to think that there must have been a large body of literature of this variety even in the days of Tolkappiyar.

In ancient Tamil literature, there was no distinction drawn between Didactic poetry and secular poetry. It seems that almost all the Cankam poetry were Didactic in spirit. It is a difficult task to choose some of the Purapporul poems as non-didactic. Even the Akapporul poems of the Cankan classics have moral leanings and didactic spirit.

At the beginning of the Christian era, a new variety of literature came into existence. The aim and purpose of this new variety of literature is to analyses and to discuss the relation between Ethics and the everyday life of the people. In this variety, Tirukkural is the earliest and the ancient Ethical literature of the Tamil language. We have to find the reason for the rise of pure Ethical literature in Tamil during this period.

When we study the Cankam classics, we are inclined to think that in the later half of the Cankam period there was a great influx of foreigners from the East and the West by the sea and from the North by the land.[27]The foreigners used to visit Tamilakam in and out of season with their precious merchandise. Ancient Tamil people were very generous and kind enough to have amiable contact with the foreigners. They allowed the foreigners to settle in this country but also to have separate colonies in their metropolis. Ancient Tamil Literature, the commentators' remarks and the observances made by the foreign travellers bear ample testimony to this fact. The contact of the foreigners and the penetration of the Northerners into Tamilakam resulted in the discrepancy of moral practice among the Tamils. The impact of alien customs and habits, moral and religious traditions have left their imprints in the history of the Tamils.

In that context, some of the ancient Tamils began to imitate the alien ways of life, customs and habits with a great zeal. The maxims and precepts of ancient Tamils were questioned and traditions forced to dissolve. The infidels were very much enticed

not by the nobler and finer traits of the alien cultures. They felt attracted towards the base and ignoble aspects of alien culture which were not healthy and conducive to the development of Tamil culture. The shifting customs, changing habits and variable rules of conduct resulted in chaos and confusion.

The master-minds of ancient Tamil community were very much annoyed to notice the decay of the cherished traditional beliefs, customs and habits of the Tamil country. They analysed the causes for this ethical catastrophe. They immediately began to impede the decadence and prevent the impasse. They thought that it was their duty to safeguardthe traditional moral fervour and the fragrant Tamil culture. So they rallied the Tamil people for their cause and infused a new blood and vigour by their clever and realistic approach. They gave a new orientation to the good old traditions, maxims and moral precepts. They were the pioneers in writing the pure ethical literature reflecting the tendencies of their age.In that galaxy of seers and saints of that traditional wisdom, Tiruvalluvar had taken the lead to enlighten not only the people of the Tamil country, but of the whole world.He dominated the thought and set the standards for the future generations, to imbibe the ideas moral reconstruction.The culmination of moral fervor of ancient Tamils blossomed in the Tirukkural. It was followed by a period of efflorescence of Ethical literature in Tamil:

This can be a historical explanation for the existence of so many works on the ethics of daily life' in Tamil. Here it is very appropriate to mention that Dr.G.U. Pope's view about the existence of large volume of Ethical literature in Tamil. Though he was a foreigner, Dr. Pope never failed to understand the true spirit of the Tamil culture. He earnestly remarks that "Sir A. Grant (Aris. Ethics) treating of Greek morality 'before the birth of Moral Philosophy' says truly: 'It is obvious that such a code as this could only rise among an essentially moral and noble race. This is precisely what I claim for the Tamil-speaking people and on the same ground. We shall not do all the good we might do among them till we more unreservedly recognize this."[28]

(b) The Tradition and Practice of the Virtuous men

The hoary traditions and practice of Aram were prevalent among the Tamils during the Cankam Age. In Tolkappiyam there are a number of references to the cherished traditions, and practice of Aran. Hence it is worthy to record the view of Tolkappiyar in regard to the traditions. He says that the good old traditions could not be expressed in mere words and their implied meaning.[29] He lays stress on the day to day usage and custom of the world.[30] The tradition has been signified as "the path led by the great men,"[31]"noble tradition[32]and "virtuous path"[33]by the various poets of the Cankam Age.

(c) The Conduct of the Virtuous Men

The way in which the disciplined behave is also considered to be another source of Aram. The practice of Great men is expected to be in accordance with the injunctions of the Ethical codes and is therefore regarded as a guide to conduct. Great men were known in ancient Tamilakem as Aravor (Virtuous men), Arivar (Wisemen), Canror (the Pef-Perfect men) and Antanar (Gracious men).

Tolkappiyar asserts that the words of the great men are in accordance with the customs and, traditions of the country.[34] By the term 'ulakiyal valakku;[35]he implies'social conventions' and 'cherished traditions of the Tamil people. He has given a noteworthy interpretation to the term 'Valakku'. He says that the convention or usage is the habits and practices of the great men which has become the customs and traditions of the society. Hence people seek the guidance of the great men."[36]

Tiruvalluvar praises the glories of great men with great reverence. He says that the aim of the Holy Scripture is to reveal the greatness of those men who have renounced all their mundane affections for the sake of virtue. Their greatness shines throughout the world. Great men will be a seed in the world of excellence. They can achieve easily the most difficult task in the world. Their

knowledge of the world is subtle and clear. They are the gracious men who shower their compassion over all other creatures.[37]

Valluvar reproves those who cannot move in harmony with the world (Great men) as learned fools."[38]In another place Valluvar appeals to men to lend their ears to when they tread on to the words of virtuous men which will help like a staff when they tread on slippery grounds in their journey of life towards the self-realisation,[39]and defines wisdom as that which lies in harmony with the world (Great men) however it might fare.[40]

The second and third sources of Aram are generally called the customary morality. Morality is the product of two variable factors, human nature and its environment. Hence it is relative to human needs and has no meaning apart from human requirements. We can make distinction between universal morality and morality of a limited group. Universal Morality is that which is relative to the universal needs of human nature, but it does not vary from place to place, or from time to time. On the other hand Morality of the limited group is relative to the needs of particular nation, ages or social groups. The concept of Morality as envisaged by the ancient Tamils is apparently Universal Morality.

(d) Individual Conscience

The fourth and the last source of Aram is 'good' conscience.' Conscience may be defined as the faculty which enables us to distinguish between right and wrong; it discovers fundamental principles of morality by the application of which to particular cases, we decide questions of right and wrong. It thus makes us to speak the right which discloses the moral qualities of acts, and guides our conduct in the moral sphere.

Butler has established beyond doubt the supremacy of conscience. In one of his sermons, he says that "there is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart and his external actions; which passes judgment upon himself and upon them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves

evil, wrong, end unjust; which without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly."[41]

Tiruvalluvar and some other poets of the Cankam Age have emphasised the development of the individual conscience. Valluvar has laid emphasis on the purity of mind which is the main source of moral consciousness. According to him the cleansing of the mind is the fundamental principle of Aram: A good life is the product of a good mind. If the mind is free from the base thoughts, then there is no need for any external observations. Hence Valluvar asserts that 'purity of mind is a treasure for man'[42] and the future bliss is the result of the purity of mind.[43]

He represents conscience by the terms 'manam' and 'nencam', which literally mean the mind'. He says that the power of knowing is from the mind;[44] the understanding of a man seems to arise from his mind."[45] Then he clearly explains the purity of mind and clarity of thought are the basic requirements for any moral action. Every individual must, keep his mind free from the base, mean and dreadful thoughts which impede the development of moral consciousness, and the flowering of conscience which is indispensable for the virtuous life.

Valluvar explains the supremacy of conscience in some of the maxims of the Kural. In describing the behaviour of the ascetics who after renouncing home and all other bonds of life, and are still unable to control their minds from the unquenching desires of the five senses, he expresses:

"Of what account is the appearance of ascetics as great as the sky, if their hearts suffer from conscious guilt?"

In this couplet, Valluvar points out the pricking of the conscience, which is common to all human beings. By this observation, he induces the people to act in accordance with the dictates of the conscience. He asserts that nobody can deceive their conscience. If anybody tries to deceive the world by their outward

appearance with fraudulent mind, then the five elements which constitute their body will laugh within them.[46]

This view has been expressed in a different way in one of the Kali odes. The poet says that the conscience is the unfailing evidence to the evil deeds of those who think that there is nobody in the world to notice their dreadful actions.[47]

Thus conscience is supreme in as much as it regulates or guides all the other powers of the mind. So the development of conscience in every individual is itself a source which directs him to the virtuous path.

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CHAPTER-V
THE ROLE OF ARAM AS THE SUPREME VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE

Ancient Tamils did not believe in any permanent feud between the human world of natural desires and social aims, and the spiritual life with its discipline and aspiration on the other. They have given a unique place to Aram in their everyday life. Their conception of Aram as a regulative principle of life is very much important in ancient Tamil literature.

The supreme values of human life have been called by Tolkappiyar and other poets of ancient Tamilakan as 'mumutar porul."[1] The three philosophies of the world-life are represented by this term. They are the doctrines of Aram, the doctrines of political economy and those of the psychology of love. In other words, Aram represents the moral values, Porul implies economic values and Inpam indicates the psychological values. These are the three-fold paths that ultimately lead to the eternal bliss.

(a) Aram

Aram, the first of the three aims, as we have seen earlier, comprises the whole context of moral and religious duties of man. Aram is the doctrine of the duties and rights of each individual in the social set up of the ancient Tamilkam.

(b) Porul

The second end of human aspirations is the material possessions. The arts that serve this aim are those of economics and politics. Literally the word Porul means, "thing, object, substance," and comprises the whole range of the tangible objects that can be possessed, enjoyed and lost, and which we require in daily life for the upkeep of the household, raising of a family and discharge of duties for the virtuous fulfillment of life's obligations. Objects that contribute also to the sensuous enjoyment, gratification of the feelings and satisfaction of the legitimate

requirements of human nature, such as love, learning, knowledge, wealth and other pleasures of life.

Porul thus connotes the attainment of earthly riches such as prosperity, advantage, profit, wealth and result.[2]

It is also used to represent the subject matter and object.[3] With reference to the external world, 'Porul', in its widest connotation, signifies, that which can be perceived, an object of the senses;[4] with reference to the interior world of psyche, it represents the end and aim, purpose, object, wish, desire,motive, cause, reason, interest, use, want, and concern.[5]Porul also implies essential principle, reality, doctrine and the objectives of human existence.[6]It is also significant to note that Porul in ancient Tamil literature generally implies the 'objective' and 'subjective' affairs of life that form the themes of poetry.[7]Porul thus implies (1) the object of human pursuit, (2) the means of pursuit, and (3) the needs and the desire suggesting this pursuit.

The most important aspect of Porul is the science of 'polity' that deals with the politics of the individual in everyday life, and the politics of the gaining exercise and maintenance of power and wealth as a king.[8]The second part of Tirukkural is well known as Porutpal which deals with the polity, diplomacy, political economy and several aspects of administration which are nobler than those of the statecraft of Machiavelli and Hobbes.

(c) Inpam

The third and the last of the three ends of human life is pleasure and love. Most of the ancient Tamil literature deal with this aspect elaborately. Hence they are significantly called as 'Akapporul nurkal. The dominant attitude of the ancient Tamils towards love and pursuit of pleasure appears to be a refined and well advanced to their times in comparison with the literature of other countries. There was hardly any technical literature or the science of love in ancient Tamilakam. But the practical needs of the yearning hearts are graphically described with the background of

psychology of love and analysis of the feelings and manners of emotional expression are clearly portrayed in the subjective poetry of the ancient Tamil literature.

(d) Vitu

Vitu, the ultimate aim of the human aspirations is redemption or the self-realisation of man. This 'Vitu' has been specifically stated nowhere in ancient Tamil literature. It is commonly supposed that this fourth end of the human aspirations has been omitted as being out of human conception.[9] Therefore it has been, the cherished tradition to speak of the supreme values of human life as the 'Trio of Human Ends' in the ancient Tamil literature.

Thus 'Aram, Porul' and 'Inpam' are the pursuits of the world. Each implies its own orientation or the philosophy of life and to each a special literature is dedicated. Tirukkural is the embodiment of these three phases of philosophy of Life. These three values of human life in ancient times, even before the days of Tolkappiyar and been grouped into two categories as Akam or the subjective values that deals with Inpam and Puram or the objective values of life that deals with the ethical and political aspects of life.

(e) The Role of Aram

We are inclined to think that whether the function of Aram is limited to the regulation of the pursuit of wealth and pleasure or whether it has any purpose of its own? In order to have a clear idea about this intricate problem, first we must analyse the two aspects of this question with the help of ancient Tamil literature.

The popular view is that Aram has no purpose but being means to an end. In other words Aram is conceived as an instrument through which the goal can be attained. The incessant pursuit of Aram in its double aspects of self-regarding and other-regarding virtues results in one's good here as well as in the next birth.

Tiruvalluvar asks that 'Aram gives eternal bliss and temporal wealth, then what is there that is more profitable than Aram?'[10]

This good whether it stands for worldly happiness or eternal bliss is as a whole designated as 'inpam' [pleasure]. Further it is believed that Aram not that only leads to the goal but that it does so invariably. Another reason attributed for its superiority over the other two values, whose pursuit may not be successful. But it should be added that for the attainment of the fruit of Aram, one may have to wait for a long time. However, the important point is that, it is sure to yield its fruits at some time even though it may be realised after some vicissitudes.

The other view which is highly spoken and admired is that Aram as an intrinsic value and therefore an end in itself. It is maintained by Valluvar and some other idealistic thinkers of the Tamil country. Albert Schweitzer has pointed out this idealistic approach of Valluvar in his treatment of Aram, observes:

> "In the ethics of the Kural, as in those of the Laws of Manu, the idea of reward has a place. The way of virtue is recommended because it leads to a better reincarnation or to liberation from rebirth. Alongside of this is found also the' naive' view which is conspicuous in Chinese ethics that moral behaviour results in earthly welfare and immoral in misfortune. Nevertheless ethics in the Kural are not so entirely dominated by the idea of reward .....We already find here the knowledge that good must be done for its own sake. It shines out from various maxims."[11]
>
> Then he quotes from Kural the following maxims:
> "Even though one should say, there is no higher
> World it is still good to give." - T.222.
> "True liberality asks nothing in return,
> What does the world give in return to the
> Cloud that gives it rain." - T.211.

The view that 'Virtue has its own reward' has been maintained and expressed by some other poets of the Cankam Age. In Purananuru a poet praises Ay, a great hero and patron of poets

and bards who was the chieftain and lord of the Potiya hills.'He says that Ay is not the person who thinks that righteous action done in this life has its own reward or happiness in the next. He does not have any mercenary motives. His munificence lies in his principle of following the virtuous path paved by the great men that good should be accomplished for its own sake."[12]

The poet deliberately rebukes others who are interested in adhering to the virtuous path with mercenary motives or the business outlook even in the sphere of Aram.

Paranar, the renowned historian of the Cankam Age, pays his tributes in the form of an immortal piece of literature to Pekan, one of the seven chieftains who in later times became famous for their liberality. Paranar describes Pekan as a man of lofty ideals: "He gives liberally [without any limit or restriction] to those who have come to his court in need of his help because he thinks that it is good to help others. His munificence lies not to secure a good re-birth.[13]in his 'egalitarian' outlook to help those who die of privation.

From these evidences, it appears that the moral principles must be absolute in the sense that it has nothing to do with our likes and dislikes. Moral principles should be followed solely out of respect for it. It is thus the nature of Aram to be ultimate. This conception of Aram presupposes a moral order (which is) to be maintained and has therefore prior claims over motives of mere self-interest. Aram, therefore is to be obeyed first and last, for its own sake, heedless of any benefits accruing to the moral agent. Such a lofty conception of duty is found only in the ethical schools which emphasis objective right in contrast to individual interest. The Hedonists' and 'Materialists' have no place for such a notion of 'Duty' and they could dispense with it as an ascetic ideal.

This idealistic conception of the ancient Tamils reminds us of the well-known principle of practicing Virtue,for its own sake. The Kantian theory of Duty for Duty's sake[14] very much resembles this view of Aram, though certain subtle distinctions may be drawn between the two.

Ancient Tamil wisdom recognized fully well the double aspects of human nature-self- love which urges one to seek one's own interest and reason which impels one to take into account the interest of others. Contrary to Hobbes and others they held that man was by nature and even in his un-moralized condition, a social being. The raw material of the moral life is therefore not merely the primary feeling for the self but includes the primary regard for others. The law of the process of moralization is the same in both the cases - dutiful attitude towards fellow-beings is fundamentally the same as dutiful towards ourselves. How is it possible? It is possible when the self realizes with the aid of the Supreme Intelligence that it is the chip of the divine force that pervades the whole universe. The self-realization of man or true knowledge is to stand in the beautiful way of devotion and love towards all creatures. Then every individual would show reverence for all life.[15]

In reality, therefore, what is good for the other man is good for me also, what is his happiness is also my happiness. The law of the individual life is also the law of the social life. So the moral development of man is doing away with the limitations of the merely selfish and the realization of the self is achieved by properly discharging the duties owed to other living creatures. A man is not serving his fellows in order to serve himself better; for that would mean that he uses others as instruments. As Kant has expressed in his famous dictum: "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as means."[16]This is what the Tamils right from the Cankam Age have borne in mind in their everyday life and activities which has been attested by the evidences that we have referred to earlier.

Now, when we say that the welfare of the society has prior claims over self-interest, the critic may ask: "Does not this render the moral life an impersonal one? If the individual strives to maintain a presupposed 'social order', what happens to the person' in me?" It is the duty of the student of the moral philosophy (of ancient Tamils) - to answer. Such doubt is due to a confusion of the term"social." The term "society" is used even by eminent

sociologists as if it has a life of its own.[17]Society they say is an organism and the individuals are but its members. We can agree with this statement, but the analogy should not be carried too far, for it is they who live not apart from it. We agree that the individual apart from society is an "abstraction', but we assert that society apart from its members is a myth. That is why we prefer to call society as an organization rather than as an organism. A common self is to be realised in each individual and in infinite ways,the life of each is bound up with that of all. In seeking therefore the good of society, I am not actually negating myself, but identifying myself with the selves of others. The progress of society is only the progress of the individuals. Hence, the life of virtue such as the life of Pekan described by Paranar, in no way can be said to be impersonal.

It is an understanding of this great truth, the truth that the ethical unit is always the person and the progress of society is only the progress of its individual members, that made the ancient Tamils recognize the universal duties and to prescribe them specifically for the householder and the ascetic. Universal love was the moral imperative, whatever be the individual's station in life.[18]This morality of universal love is now commonly called as "reverence for life." Here the individuals act with the welfare of all in view and society has always the welfare of each in mind. This has been considered as the highly commendable ethical ideal. Perfecting himself, the individual contributes simultaneously to the progress of society. Even the highly perfect man - canror - has his duty towards his society. For action is the very nature of the self and no man can remain inactive for a moment. This has been justified in Kural by the idea of ethical activity. Work and profit place a man in a position to do good. 'If one weigh the value of the good deed done without consideration of the advantage, 1ts kindness is greater than the ocean;'[19]To assuage the deadly hunger of the poor is the treasury of the rich;[20] 'Wealth in benevolence is the wealth of wealths; Wealth in possessions the job has also.'[21]

The 'self in theories 1ike Hedonism and materialism is realized only partly, for it is the only the individual nature of the self that is realized. In the ideal under discussion the self-realized is a whole - both the individual and the social aspects of the Self are realized at once. To the individual by a strict adherence to the Aram, bliss is guaranteed here and in the hereafter. Valluvar categorically - remarks that 'there is nothing greater good than Aram, from the practice of which flow the various riches and heaven.'[22] In another context he refers to the double aspects of moral goodness viz. devotion to social duties and the culmination of the personal virtues. Valluvar emphasises that "every good act is duty to those who have realised that is proper to seek perfection."[23]

There is the further assurance that 'he who performs his duty but abstains from evil deeds incurs no sin.[24]This is an ideal which is unique, inspiring and possible. The man with an impulsive and energetic nature can discharge his duties by leading the life of the householder and after attaining indifferent taste by gratification in mundane possessions and pleasures, he can have different duties to perform by renouncing the bindings of the family life which has been highly spoken with great reference in the Cankam Age."[25]Thus, here is no contradiction arising as in the Kantian theory. In this aspect of Aram again there is guarantee that each will do his part and nothing is more encouraging than such an assurance. This is absent in Kantian theory of the 'duty for duty's sake.' Aram is also free from this limitation. In the Tamil thought as generally found in Indian thought, all creation is taken into account and duties are due not only to one's kith and kin but to the animal and even the plant kingdoms. Thus embracing all, the individual becomes perfect, there is no room for conceit, for he is unattached. And the process of the self-realization of the individual rests in the progress of society. This is the 'Summum bonum' aspired by the ancient Tamils.

We have thus seen how the Tamilian ideal of Aram is theoretically sound and practically realisable. The testimony of ancient Tamil literature bear ample proof to the fact that such a life was actually lived by the people of ancient Tamilakam. It is this lofty ideal of Aram that has kept us up in the face of frequent attacks and prolonged sufferings and sorrows under the domination of the foreigners.

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   நிலைமைத்து ஆகலின் துறவறமாகிய காரண வகையாற்
   கூறப்படுவதல்லது இலக்கண வகையாற் கூறப்படாமையின்
   நூல்களாற் கூறப்படுவன ஏனை மூன்றுமேயாம்"
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CHAPTER- VI
ETHICS AND RELIGION

(a) What is Religion?

The origin of religion is inextricably linked up with the problem of the origin of man himself and the former cannot be very satisfactorily explained without offering some explanation to the latter.

If we look into the history of mankind, it will be seen that the chief agent in promoting the morality has been religion. From the pre-historic period to the modern era, religion has been the director of humanity to the path of virtue.

To define religion in a simple and satisfactory way is a difficult task. There are several definitions of religion and yet there is no agreement in its most general sense. Prof. Webb apparently came to the conclusion as "I do not myself believe that religion can be defined."[1]Another scholar thinks that "no attempt to define the word is likely to be quite satisfactory, but almost any definition may serve the purpose of an argument if the, writer who employs it, states his meaning frankly and adheres to it steadfastly."[2] We can have this view as the basis for the present study.

From the etymological point of view Bouquet has shown religion is derived from the Latin word rel (1) igio, which itself is derived from religare which, means 'to gather - count or observe' or 'to bind'. In the former sense the implication is "belief in, and observation of, signs of Divine communication."[3] In the latter sense the implication is the performance of necessary actions which may bind together man and supernatural powers. Both the implications are relevant in view of the fact that beliefs and rituals have been found to be the main component parts of religions everywhere.

Max Muller thought that 'having a care' for the goods as the correct etymology of this term and said that 'in its first conception the word can only have meant respect, care and reverence.'[4]

The various definitions of religion can be classified as philosophical and idealistic, psychological and socio-logical definitions."

First we can analyse the philosophical approach to religion. Religion has been defined as "the determination of human life by the sentiment of a bond, uniting the human mind to that mysterious mind, whose domination of the world of itself, it recognizes and to whom it delights in feeling itself (is) united."[5] There are three objections to this definition. The phases of religion to which this definition refers may be found in the religion of the cultured races, but not in that of the primitive people. Secondly,although religion exercises a great influence upon savages, it cannot be said to determine their life and the recognition of a mysterious mind, dominating the world is possible among civilized people only. Thirdly the feeling of delight at the supposed union between man and the mysterious mind is beyond the scope of the immatured mind of the primitive races.

There is another definition cited by M. Jr. Jastrow in his 'Study of Religion' . "Religion is the means of establishing men's proper relationship to the divine order of things."[6]

This definition seems to have expanded in the following one:"Religion is a felt practical relationship with what is believed in as a superhuman being or beings."[7]

Kant has explained that "religion as the recognition of all duties as divine commands.[8]

Bishop Butler remarks that religion is the belief in one God or Creator or Moral Governor of the world and a future state of retribution."[9]

These are all idealistic definitions of religion which are not based on empirical knowledge and practical experience.

Some other scholars have attempted to interpret religion in the light of psychology. Hopkins defines religion as "endeavour to secure the recognition of socially recognized values through the specific actions that are believed to evoke some agency different from ego of the individual or from other dependence upon this agency.[10]Durkheim, the sociologist, on the other hand defines religion as follows:

"When a certain number of sacred things sustain relations of coordination or subordination with having a certain unity but which is not comprised within any other system of the same sort, the totality of these beliefs and their corresponding rites constitute a religion."[11] The author considers this definition as only preliminary and so gives the following to complement it.

"A religion is a united system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things, set apart and forbidden-beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them."[12]

The above interpretation of religion cannot be applied to all religions. Although, as Dr. Marett has pointed out "Religion in its psychological aspect is a mode of social behaviour,"[13]it would not be easy to find one single moral community' or an organized 'church' wherever religion exists.

By religion, Frazer understands a proposition or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct or control the course of nature and of human life."By powers' he means "conscience" or 'personal agents.'[14]

"Religion" says Prof. Allen Menzies, "is the worship of unseen powers from a sense of need."[15] This view gives prominence to worship, perhaps thinking that there can be no worship without belief.

The definition given by Prof. Jastrow is very much like a combination of those of Frazer and Menzies mentioned above. According to him, religion consists of three elements:

(1) The natural recognition of a Power or Powers beyond our control, Powers, and

(2) The feeling of dependence upon the Power or

(3) Entering into relation with this Power or Powers.

Uniting these elements into a single proposition,he defines religion as "the natural belief in a Power or Powers beyond our control and upon whom we feel ourselves dependent; which belief and feeling of dependence prompted:

(1) to organization,

(2) to specific acts, and

(3) to the regulation of conduct, with a view of establishing favourable relations, between ourselves and the Power or Powers in question."[16]

This is indeed an admirable analysis of religious sentiment and one or more of these elements are to be found other in each of the following definitions in some form or other:

"Religion is the belief in invisible, superhuman Powers (or a Power) which are (is) conceived of after the analogy of the human spirits on which (whom) man regards himself as dependent for his well-being and to which (whom) he is at least in some sense responsible for his conduct, together with the feelings and practices which are naturally followed from such a belief."[17]Thus the author says the lowest form of religion is most properly denominated a 'vague and unreflecting spiritism.'

According to Macdonell, "Religion means on the one hand the body of belief entertained by men regarding the divine or supernatural powers, and on the other, that sense of dependence on those powers which is expressed by wording the form of prayer and praise or by act in the form of ritual and sacrifice."[18] This definition appears to be reasonable in the case of Eastern religions.

"Religion is force of belief cleansing the inward parts……. A religion on its doctrinal side, can thus be defined as a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended."[19]

Julian Huxley observes, "What then, is religion?It is a way of life. It is a way of life which follows necessarily from a man's holding certain things in reverence from his feeling and believing them to be sacred. And those things which are held sacred, by religion primarily concern human destiny and the forces with which it comes into contact."[20]

A recent writer has attempted to explain religion as "a commerce, a conscious and willed relation into which the soul in distress enter with the mysterious power on which it feels that is and its destiny depend. This commerce with God is realised by prayer. PRAYER IS RELIGION IN ACT THAT IS TO SAY, REAL RELIGION…… Religion then is inward prayer and deliverance. It is inherent in man and could only be torn from his heart by separating man from himself, if I may so say, and destroying that which constitutes humanity in him."[21] The author gives supreme importance to prayer and asserts prayer as an aspect of religion.

"Religion" according to Dr.S.Radhakrishnan," "refers to something external, a system of sanctions and consolations, while spiritually points to the need for knowing and living in the highest self and raising life in all its parts. Spirituality is the core of religion and its inward essence and mysticism emphasizes this side of religion."[22]

These examples could be multiplied but they might have served to show what diversity of thought exists on the concept of religion. All these definitions so far given are incomplete, emphasising one aspect of religion to the exclusion of others.

(b) The conception of Religion of the Tamilian

In this context, we must try to understand the philosophy of religion as conceived by ancient Tamils. There is no word in ancient Tamil literature which is equivalent to the term 'Religion'. Only in Manimekalai[23] which is believed to be a post-Cankam literature, we are able to find a term that represents 'Religion." But this does not mean that the ancient Tamils did not have any religious belief. There were several elements of religion,especially the religious practices and cults. We can cite a number of evidences from Tolkappiyam to the worship of many deities and also the supreme God. In the Cankam classics there are references to a number of religious cults-and tenets which were closely associated with the worship of God. Before the Cankam Age, the seed was sown, from which the two off-shoots of Hinduism (viz. Saivism and Vaishnavism) germinated in the Cankam Age and after a few centuries, it has blossomed as the southern school of Hinduism.

In spite of the absence of an equivalent term to religion in Cankam literature, we are able to get some in- direct reference to the concept of religion in them. In his adoration to God, Tiruvalluvar makes reference to "the faultless path of righteousness ordained by God" as 'poyter olukka neri' [பொய்தீர் ஒழுக்க நெறி][24]. This phrase gives the concept of religion as envisaged by ancient Tamils. Parimelalakar, the commentator of Tirukkural explains this phrase as the true path of righteousness."[25]What does it,mean? Which is the true path? These are the questions which at once arise in our minds.

According to Valluvar 'those who pursue the genuine path of righteousness ordained by Him who has quenched the desires of the five senses shall live internal beatitude.'[26] By the attribute 'faultless', he means 'genuine." There are several ways and means to attain the human values in this world. Even the layman has his own code of life which leads him to his goal. That code of life may or may not be based on the ethical and moral principles. He leads a life in pursuit of happiness in his own way which has been

regulated by the customs and traditions which may constitute the moral and ethical codes of his country. But we cannot say that his path is faultless. He is not very keen about their means. His only aim in life is to attain pleasure in this world. So he would not care for the faultless genuine path that leads to happiness. Even the happiness which is the summum bonum could not be an everlasting bliss. Hence it is clear that the path of a layman may not be a faultless, genuine righteous path. The righteous path ordained by God alone can lead to the eternal bliss or the final beatitude which is the supreme end of all the human aspirations Kalinkar, one of the commentator of Kural says that "Men who after controlling desires of the five senses viz. body, mouth, eyes, nose and ears which are the means to the enjoyment of the taste, light, touch, sound and smell, pursue the righteous path of spiritual instruction ordained by God shall be the men who have attained salvation.[27] Hence we can regard that 'poyter olukka neri signifies the concept of religion.

From this evidence we can infer that ancient Tamils had a firm belief in the existence of God, and worshipped Him with great reverence. They thought that they could attain salvation by strictly adhering and practising religion. Therefore religion is called "marrintu varaneri" [மற்றீண்டு வாரா நெறி] i.e. 'the path that leadeth not again into this world' (K.356).

Though there were a diversity of religious beliefs and practices in the Cankam Age; there was hardly any systematized religion in the modern sense of the term. After a few centuries, new shape and form were given to those primitive beliefs and practices which began to flourish as the native religions of the Tamil country from the middle of the fifth century A.D. Even in the Cankam Age, there are positive proof to the intrusion of Jainism and Buddhism in the Tamil land, but they came into prominence only after the decline and fall of the Three Tamil kingdoms.

From the foregoing discussion we are able to have a comprehensive knowledge about religion as a form of feeling and activity controlled by our faith in a supernatural Being or Beings. Religion seems to have concerned about experience which are regarded as of supreme value.

c) Two Aspects of Religion

Bergson has made distinction in religion as open (Dynamic) religion and closed (static) religion."[28]He seems to have based his enquiry on biological foundations. Bergson lays stress on the personal experience of God, direct contact with the creative spirit as open (Dynamic)religion, on the other hand by 'closed (static) religion' he means the ritualistic and creedal form of religion which is "a defensive reaction of nature against the dissolvent power of intelligence," operating through the myth making activity. The two kinds of religion are very similar to the distinction of 'Primitive' and 'Higher religions made by the anthropologists. The 'open religion' is the source of spiritual experience in which the human soul can refresh and restore itself and attain self-realisation.

(d) Two Aspects of Morality

Similarly, Bergson has made distinction between two types of morality, static and dynamic, "open" and "closed". He says that "the social life is immanent, like a vague ideal, in instinct as well as in intelligence…… But in a hive or ant-hill the individual is riveted to his task by his structure, and the organization is relatively invariable, whereas the human community is variable in form, open to every kind of progress. The result is that in the former each rule is laid down by nature and is necessary,whereas in the latter only one thing is necessary, the necessity of a rule." Here we find the naturalistic basis of static (closed) morality."

Open morality on the other hand, is "supra- intellectual," and also "supra-social"[29] Both are intertwined on the plane of civilized human life; the one is Social, the other personal."Between the first morality and the second lies the whole distance between

repose and movement."[30] The close relation between moral and religious nature of man pervades his treatment of morality in his monumental work: The two sources of Morality.'

In this light, we must try to trace the relationship between religion and morality. Morality may be defined as the expression of human conduct and character in its aim of decreasing unnecessary pain or harm and increasing the happiness or benefit of the mankind. Morality originally meant the observance of tribal (social) mores or customs, good or bad and was something more than what we now call convention. Bergson calls this as 'closed morality' which rests on the obligations resulting from the structure of society and the pressures which the elements of society exert on one another. By "Morality"Prof.G.Whitehead, means the observance of the "mores"or customs. It may be conceived in the minds of the cultivated with what should be the customs regulating conduct, or with what are the customs. Originally morality and convention were the same. What was unusual was condemned as 'immoral..... Primitive morality invariably lay far more stress upon "thou shall not" rather than upon "thou shalt" the negative rather than the positive."[31]

Religion is (to some extent) a social phenomenon and reflects the development of society in which it functions. The evolution of religion reveals that there has been a close connection between religion and morality. Religion gives a certain expression and sanction to the mores of the group. It seems that religious customs were recognized as such by men before moral customs were distinguished from them. In this way morality seems to have evolved from religion.

(e) Religion and Morality:

In the daily life of an individual morality and religion are so intimately connected with each other which are very difficult to distinguish. Morality influences religion; and religion in its turn affects morality. "Morality" says Wundt, "are in the first instance, inextricably commingled. Hence we find almost universally that

legislation and the superintendence of the public morals are originally priestly functions; and this outward unification of the various factors that go to make up the ethical and religious norms, their representation by one and the same individual is in complete accordance with their confusion in the popular consciousness."[32]

Though there seems to be a close connection between Ethics and Religion, yet it must be admitted that religion is an elevated form is usually conditioned by morals. The gradual development of our moral nature reveals the inner urge of our religions sentiments and the consciousness of duty inevitably lead to the discovery of a righteous source, which is the centre of our moral and religious aspirations alike. Religion has thus been defined by Matthew Arnold as 'morality touched with emotion.'[33]

There are some moral philosophers who believe that religion supplies the ingredients of moral action. It is maintained in consistence with this position, that the command of the God is the ultimate source of morality. His arbitrary will is the final standard of right. To know our duty, therefore, we must consult the will of God. Knowledge of God, His will and fear and reverence for him thus underlie morality. This view with certain modifications is advanced by Descartes, Locke and Paley and a number of Oriental philosophers.

But throughout the historical period, the decline in religion did not follow by an immediate decline of morality. Customs and habits which regulate the society have continued to influence the life and activities of the people until the moral fervour of the people diminish.

According to De Burgh, the distinction between religion and morality is threefold. He says that religion includes a wider range of duties than of morality. Worship, prayer and the observance of rites and sacraments are among the most important of religious duties. Religion implies personal communion with God, while morality is possible apart from belief in our other worldly order. "A man" observes De Burgh "may do his duty habitually

throughout his life without ever being aware that there is such a thing as moral philosophy."[34]Morality has only indirect influence with a man's conduct in relation to his fellowmen.

The second difference is that "the essence of morality lies in paraxis that of religion lies in theoria".[35]By this De Burgh means that religion implies conduct as well as knowledge. For religion, knowledge is more important and action is for the sake of knowledge. Religion has its source and its goal in knowledge. But in the case of morality,Knowledge is merely a means to a better action.

The next and last distinction made by De Burgh is that religion has its centre in 'God', whereas morality has its centre in 'man'. Different emotional attitudes which we find in morality and religion favours the development of purely humanistic ethics which does not contain any reference to God or any supernatural Being.

Then he comes to the conclusion that religion as an activity of speculative reason is more closely allied to philosophy than morality. It leads to at theocentric world view, which requires examination in the light of knowledge drawn from non-religious sources. Religious experience though self-critical cannot stand alone; it calls for integration with philosophy.[36]

However, morality, though independent of religion, affects in an important way. A low or elevated moral tone degrades or exalts our religious belief. As human nature is more or less reflective, it cannot continue long in a state of blind acquiescence. When we reflect on the proper grounds of religious beliefs, we find that they contain by pre-eminence, elements of love and reverence, and only in the subordinate degree elements of fear and awe. "Religious thought and feeling" says Calderwood "rest on a rational basis and are capable of being elevated and purified by application of our original belief to the guidance of our life, in harmony with personal obligation and responsibility."[37]

From this, we can infer that religion gives objectivity to moral values. There is something other- worldly about morality in its higher phases. Morality is more than a question of laws and conventions, It implies a personal loyalty rather than obedience to impersonal law. The outward manifestation of Aram is the spontaneous overflow of the purity of mind in good action. Aram lays stress on the existence of individual selves who are in some sense doers of their own actions, in the reality of time and in existence of evil, and gains from certain other philosophical beliefs. In this aspect morality implies a sort of mystical experience. This outlook is provided for the Indians by their religion. If the ethical ideals are profound, they will give a systematic approach to reality. The consciousness of Aram must include a conviction of the reality of ideals. If we consider the conviction of the reality of ideals as religion, then ethical humanism would be an active religion.

"The paramount of virtue of religion" says, Matthew Arnold, "is that it has lighted up morality that it has supplied the emotion and inspiration needful for carrying the sage along the narrow way perfectly for carrying the ordinary man along with it at all."[38]

This view can be elucidated from the sources of ancient Tamil thought. The ancient Tamil people did not believe in any statutory methods of salvation. The creed was not essential for them in their pursuit of salvation. But they have given that place to Aram. In their everyday life, they actively pursued the moral life for the realisation of God. Thus they seem to have believed that the knowledge of God or realisation of God as the 'summum bonum' of moral life and the, ethical activity as the practice of religion.

Ancient Tamils believed that God is the embodiment of Aram. They perceived the ethical drive in man as the divine imperative of God and visualised God 'as the Gracious sage, who is the ocean of Virtue.'[39]

(f) God of Aram

Aram also seems to have been personified as a deity, the god of Virtue' [அறக்கடவுள்], but he is one of comparatively abstract character. He has been recognized as the 'god of retribution' who brings down all immeasurable good fortune and as the imposer of penalty on those who have committed crimes. In this aspect, he has been identified as the god of fate' who induces the people to reap the consequences of their deeds in the previous births.

In the age of Tolkappiyam, this deity seems to have been known to the people. Tolkappiyar refers to this deity as 'vinai' [வினை][40] in one place, and as 'pal' [பால்] [41]in another place. But he generally makes reference to this deity by the term Aram,"[42] in other context. All these references indicate that ancient Tamils had some idea about the 'god of Virtue', in his manifestation as the god of fate or retribution, i.e., Nemesis.

During the Cankam Age, this seems to have crystallized into a well-established tradition. Valluvar has made passing remarks to this tradition. In his discussion on the important role of loving-kindness in the everyday life of man, he remarks that the god of virtue oppresses loveless beings, as the blazing sun does the boneless creature."[43]

In another context, Valluvar persuades the people to be self-restraint. He says that the "god of virtue will come across the path and abide the time of the man who guards his wrath and learns and is able to subdue self."[44]When describing the various ill-effects of evil deeds, Valluvar warns that "do not think even forgetfully to cause injury to others. If any one does so, the god of virtue will certainly think of ruining him."[45]

Tiruvalluvar gives importance to the making of strenuous efforts of man in his everyday life. He reminds that though the god of virtue should make your strenuous effort vain, you will gain the reward in proportion to your strenuous effort."[46] These references in Tirukkural suggest that the conception of the 'god of virtue' has been gradually elevated into a supreme one.

There are a few references to the god of virtue in Purananuru. A poet of Alattur persuades king Killivalavan to administer justice impartially like the 'God of Virtue'.[47] In the same anthology another poet known as Perum Cittiranar portrays the pathetic picture of his family. While he describes the significant characteristics of his wife, the poet remarks that "she never blames the god of virtue for her misfortune in life"[48]

The god of virtue is also represented by the term Aram in the other Cankam classics. A bereaved mother blames the god of virtue' when she learns her daughter has eloped with her lover.[49]

A lady-love in her desperate mood asks her companion whether it is appropriate to the virtue of ladies to worship the deities when her husband has gone to a far off place. At once the companion consoles her by saying that the 'god of virtue' has prevented her lord's business tour'.[50]

Another heroine, who seems to have lost all her hope and faith in her sweetheart's return, rebukes the sea god to help her in searching her lover in the sea. If she would not help her, she warns that she will make the sea to dry up by her heel with the help of the god of virtue'.[51]These illustrate the magnanimous nature of the god of virtue.

In Cilappatikaram we notice a tragic incident in which the heroine of the epic is involved. When the darkest shadows of life fell on Kannaki, she bursts into tears. She pleads that her husband was innocent and there was no wrong with him. The careless attitude of the king resulted in the death of her husband Kovalan. She summons the god of virtue,'reproving him as foolish and asks him "whether it is charitable on your part to make me desolate and desperate for the cruel action of the irrational king?"[52]

Whenever ladies happened to face misfortune in their life, they used to blame and rebuke the god of virtue for their lot. From the Cankam Age, it seems that it has been the inherent nature of the ladies of Tamilakam.

From the foregoing evidences, we are inclined to think that ancient Tamils had a clear vision of the 'god of virtue' as a supreme deity renowned for his equity.

In this context, it is appropriate to note that this 'god of virtue' is quite different from the Dharma devata' of the Hindu mythology. He has been identified with Yama, the god of death for which we have a good number of 'evidences in ancient Tamil literature. It is noteworthy to mention that Tiruvalluvar has made a clear distinction between the god of virtue' [அறக்கடவுள்] and 'Kurruvan' [கூற்றுவன்] , Yema the god of death[53] Hence, it seems that this conception of the god of virtue' to have had independent origin in Tamilakam, which, in later times might have gone into the Hindu mythology, where it has been identified with 'Yama,' the god of death.

There is hardly any evidence to Dharmadevata in the Vedic lore.There seems to have been in use the term 'Dharmam.' But it did not denote the 'god of virtue'.[54]"Dharmam in the Rig-Veda" remarks Dr.C.S.Venkateswaran,is an, established law, decree or such other activity of a god as upholds, supports and sustains the order of things in the world."

In later classical literature, dharman is gradually replaced by the form of dharmah, an, a-stem in the masculine gender. It means the eternal law, religion and social obligations, as also the different duties of man - in short all the stabilizing forces that make for peace and happiness in the world at large.[55]

In the Mahabharatha of Vyasa, Yama, the god of death, is described as the 'god of virtue' and the father of Yutistra.[56]This is the earliest evidence which we get from the Sanskrit literature for the belief of the Aryans in 'the god of virtue'.In the Puranas of the later period,'Dharma' came to be known as a deity and several mythical lore began to revolve around him."[57]

This kind of identification of Yama with the 'god of virtue' seems to be a concept which has penetrated into Tamil literature gradually in after the Cankam Age.

This notion of the god of virtue reminds us of the Nemesis of Greek Mythology. She seems to be one of the most puzzling goddess of retribution owing to the wide divergence between her mythology and her position in cult and morals. In the vast majority of the cases she is nothing but retribution or righteous indignation, particularly that of the gods at human presumption, personified.

In the Greek literature, Nemesis is described as the daughter of Night, though some call her as the daughter of Erebus. She is the "personification of the moral reverence for law, of the natural fear of committing a culpable action, and hence of conscience.[58]

Herodotus and Pindar have referred Nemesis as "a kind of fatal divinity for she directs human affairs in such a manner as to restore the right proportions or equilibrium wherever it has been disturbed, she measures out happiness and unhappiness, and he who is blessed with too many or too frequent gifts of fortune, is visited by her with losses and sufferings, in order that he may become humble and feel that there are bounds beyond which human happiness cannot proceed with safety."[59]

Nemesis was thus a check upon extravagant favours, conferred upon man by fortune and from this idea arose that Nemesis being the goddess of retribution. In this aspect she resembles to a certain degree to the 'god of virtue' of the earlier period and the 'god of death' in the later period who appears to be the embodiment of both the gods of virtue and death.

Hence it is clear that in the moral philosophy of ancient Tamils, the concept of Aram in one of its phases, seems to have personified as the 'god of virtue.'

In the later Cankam period, this deity has been recognized as one of the god in the Theogony of the Tamils. During the period of Religious Revival, religion acquired a supreme place in all walks of life. Even then Aram had an important role in the life and activities of the people. But it has been given a religious tint and systematized in accordance with the doctrines of that particular religion. From that time onwards, the institution of Aram which rests upon no religious basis has found in practice to be inefficacious. Thus out of necessity, Aram has assumed the place of an handmaid to religion in Tamilakam.

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PART – II

EVOLUTION OF ETHICAL IDEALS IN ANCIENT TAMIL LITRERATURE

BOOK ONE

ELEMENTS OF ETHICS IN TOLKAPPIYAM

CHAPTER I
THREE STAGES OF ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT

(a) Two Aspects of Culture

The history of moral evolution is nothing but the history of mankind. If we want to know the purpose of human life in its real nature, we must trace the origin and growth of moral life from the pre-historic period. There are three stages in the development of ethics. It is a difficult task to point out the pure ethical elements in the life of the primitive people. The maturity of mind and the wisdom to judge are the important elements of ethical intuition. These characteristic features of ethics could not be found in the life of the primitive people. We can notice the seeds of moral life that were sown in that period. But they were hidden under the customs and conventions of the tribal community.

Ancient Tamil literature reveals that there was three stages in the development of literature which might have been the reflection of the evolution of ancient Tamil culture. Cultural evolution must be distinguished from organic evolution and failure to do so leads to the formulation of cultural theories that will commit the "Culturalistic fallacy." The course of organic evolution can be portrayed properly as a tree of life, as Darwin has called it, with trunk, limbs, branches and twigs. The course of development of human culture in history cannot be so described, even metaphorically. There is a constant branching out, but the branches also grow together again, wholly or partially all the time. Cultural diverges, but it syncretizes and anastomoses too. Life really does nothing but diverge; its occasional convergences are superficial resemblances not a joining or a reabsorption. A branch on the tree of life may approach another branch; it will not normally coalesce with it. The tree of culture, on the contrary, is a ramification of such coalescences, assimilations or acculturations."[1]

Before we interpret the evolution of Tamil culture in terms of sociology, we must be aware of the "culturalistic fallacy." What is known as the "culturalistic fallacy' may be held to include a common but equally fallacious view of literature too. If we say "literature evolves" or "literature develops itself" and allow ourselves to forget that these can only be used as convenient figures of abstract speech, we are in danger of closing the door to all possibility of understanding the nature of the process to which we thus refer so glibly. Strictly speaking human beings are the actual agents. Hence no one interested in change can afford to ignore the psychological factor, that is to say, however, the psychological factor as manifested in culture rather than in individual personality. We must "analyses cultural events and situations first in cultural terms - but remember always that cultural happenings are also personal and psychological happenings" for "after all culture exists only through persons, in or by their behaviour."[2]

It is indispensable for an objective approach that we should appreciate culture change in terms of stimulus and response relationship. This kind of approach that in psychology is known as behaviourism, but it does not go so far as to deny the possibility of an adaptation being due to reflective thinking, such denial being the point of view only of the extreme behaviourists."[3]We have a wealth of material to admire and appreciate what the early people were thinking in ancient Tamilakam. There are a number of evidences to the observable responses of ancient Tamil society to the stimuli to which it has been exposed.

In this context, it will be appropriate to distinguish the two aspects of culture which have rooted deeply in the development of human institutions. Kroeber has drawn attention to the two aspects of culture, which he calls' eidos' and 'ethos.'Eidos is the formal appearance of a culture derived from its constituents. Contrasted with the aggregate of constituents is 'ethos', the disposition of a culture which determines its quality, its main themes and interests. This has been believed to consist in the total emotional emphasis

of a culture, and 'eidos' consists in the emphasis resulting from the cognitive process which operates within a culture. We have noticed elsewhere the important role of 'ethos' in shaping the moral life of the people of a particular nation or country.

(b) Stimuli and Response

The three stages of literary, and ethical development which we mentioned earlier is itself the conscious response to the obvious stimuli to which the primitive Tamils were exposed. The ancient Tamil people noted the landscape of the habitual portions of the country could be divided into five natural regions viz., kurinci, mountainous country, mullai, the forest tracts, marutam, the river valley, neytal, the littoral region and palai, the sandy desert-land which has no separate region in the Tamil country, but the neighbouring landscape of the border regions of kurinci and mullai," have been identified as palai. Ethnologists and Historians are of the opinion that the earliest Tamil people might have had their origin in the hilly-tracts for which there are numerous allusions in ancient Tamil literature. Hence the ancient Tamil people seem to have descended from the mountainous region to the forest region which is yet at the foot of the mountains and then migrated to the river-valleys. In these regions there appears to have evolved a different kind of human culture in response to the changing geographical and climatic environments.

(c) The First Stage

The earliest region inhabited by the primitive Tamil people as we have noticed earlier is kurinci. In this part of the country the first stage of the semi-nomadic culture had its origin. The life and activities of the Tamil people in this region appears to be similar to that of the Neolithic culture of the pre-historic period. In this first stage of cultural development, the life of the Tamil people was in response to the stimuli to which it was exposed.

The people lived in the natural caves and dense forest regions in the mountains and hilly tracts. They had to face the dangers of natural calamities and the fierce attacks of the wild animals, ubiquitous snakes, pythons and other venomous creatures.

They used to hunt with bow and arrow and fought against animals with lances. They dressed themselves with the hides and skins of the animals which they used to hunt. They were brave and daring people who had little care for their lives. Their women were dressed with leaf-garments and the bark of the trees. They had roots, fruits, honey and the flesh of the various animals as their food. The men and women in this region by the biological urge fell in love with each other at the first sight which has been praised as the home of romantic love in subsequent periods.[3 (a)]

It has been very often said that religion itself originated with primitive man in fear, wonder and awe; and sacrifices were performed as a mode of cajoling and pacifying malignant and vindictive supernatural beings. In the midst of various rites and cults, the cult of Murukan [முருகன்] was a prominent one among the primitive people of the mountainous region. Their favourite God was' Ceyon,' the Lord of the hills. The worship of 'Ceyon' was associated with the beauty of Nature. The word Ceyon signifies Lord Murukan. The early progenitors of Tamil country thought that their God was the embodiment of the perennial youth, ever ceasing fragrance and the eternal beauty reflected in Nature. Their worship and mode of life were coloured by the environment in which they lived. They used to call Murukan, even in this aspect of the supreme Godhead as the 'Lord of the hills'. Gradually the cult of Murukan was mingled with various beliefs and practices. Ancient Tamils found that the rising sun which was the nearest vestige to His greatness and glory was red. Hence they called their God as the incarnation of red or Ceyon. Here red implies both the complexion and goodness- the basic principle of moral conduct - which is the chief characteristic feature of any personality.

The worship of Murukan was associated with music and ritual dancing which is known as veriyatal or velanatal. We have noticed already hunting was the primary and primitive occupation of the nomadic hill tribes. So they gave their spear, in the hands of their God and called him Spear-man or Velan. During the ritual dance, Murukan was represented by a priest who used to hold a spear, in his hand and in due course, he came to be known as Velan. In the historic period Murukan has identified as the God of mountain abodes.

In this primitive society, the growth of moral conduct was a slow and spontaneous process of moulding the usages and customs with the sanction of time and force into a harmonious blending of the 'mores'. The savage tribes first learned to control their rude behaviour towards friends and relatives. Gradually they began to perfect their life by adhering to the customs of their clan. This is the first stage of moral development. In this stage the habits and customs of the tribe not only elevated the human wisdom, and resolved their aims, but also laid the foundation for the social structure, which is the ultimate source for the moral life.

Though the elements of Aram had their origin in this stage, but they were produced by the innate instincts or the stimuli created by the external environment. The development of rationalized moral behaviour was not the characteristic feature of the life in this stage of cultural development. Nevertheless, if these elements of morality did not have their origin in the beginning of human society, the life of the man would have been similar to the animal life. So it is clear that moral life is the significant characteristic feature of mankind and its elements have had their origin in the beginning of the history of humanity itself.

(d) The Second Stage

In the next stage of cultural development, the inhabitants of the hilly region migrated to the forest region. They were confronted with the rising needs of the life in the forest tracts. The change in life and habits of the people stimulated them to have

semi-nomadic life, to discover metals and to make instruments out of them. The people who lived in this middle region between the high lands and river valleys were called as 'itaiyars.' They lived a merry pastoral life by tending the cattle and playing on the flute made out of bamboo or of the stem of the water-lilly. They spent their ample leisure in love-making.[4]

The idea of the 'community' and the social consciousness of man emerged in this stage of cultural development. In due course they had to face some problems which were common to all the members of the society such as the sudden attacks and raids of other tribes in the neighbouring region, the cattle-lifting and the intermittent attacks by the wild animals. Hence they were forced to select a bold, young and energetic leader from their community to protect, them from the external danger and to avoid the internecine classes. The people extended their hearty cooperation and allegiance to the leader and in return he had some obligations towards the community.

The people in this region were devout worshippers of Mayon, the Lord of the forest region. He was well known as the god of wandering pastoral tribes. The term 'Mayon,' literally means the god with black complexion.'This itself bears ample testimony to the changing conception of the god and implies that the mental outlook of ancient Tamils have been changed in accordance with the geographical environment. The distant view of the cloud-capped mountains, green and shady appearance of the forests and the green steppe adjoining them emulated the spirit of aesthetic sense in them. These natural scenery provided the congenial atmosphere for contemplation and calm disposition. This charming manifestation of the natural phenomena induced them to visualise this aspect of Nature as Mayon, the god of the pastoral region[5] (a)The worship of Mayon was associated with music and religious dance called Mayonatal.

This pastoral culture appears more or less similar to that of the Bronze Age and Chalcolithic culture of the pre-historic period. The habits, customs, traditions and the rudimentary

laws of the society controlled the conduct and character of every individual. Hence this stage is known as the Epoch of "Customary Morality." During this stage of cultural development, the general welfare of the society was the main aim of the community. But the people were forced to lead a life of strictly adhering to the customs, usages and the 'mores' of the society. They were afraid to violate or deviate from the observances of the society. Customs are only the habits of society. It has been called as "Mores." These 'mores' have been conceived in the masterminds of this stage of culture with what should be the customs regulating conduct, or with what are the customs that are in practice. In this period the morality and convention were not distinguished. What was unusual was condemned as immoral. They laid stress upon "thou shalt not" rather upon "thou shalt", the negative virtues, rather than the positive.

Every individual learned to live in quite harmony with the customs and conventions of the society from the childhood. When ancient Tamils invented the art of writing, they might have systematised those customs and conventions of the society into a moral code. The society readily approved those written codes of moral life, as the revealed scriptures, divine commandments and the proper guides for life. Society thus became the breeding ground of Aram.

The sages and seers of this stage, recognized the customs that promoted the welfare of the society as the moral laws. The customs and moral laws of the society protected the moral tone of the individual and gave an impetus to the development of moral conscience in man.

In this stage, the priests, elders, leaders and masterminds of the tribes and clans played a prominent part in promoting the customary morality as the 'heritage' of their community and fostering them among the younger generation. At last, the rights of protecting and promoting the morality seems to have wrested in the society itself.

The elements of ethics in this second stage of ethical development appears to have elevated into a higher level. The criterion for deciding which is good?' have emerged in the shape of customary morality. The rational outlook and the general will of the society became prominent in this stage. Nevertheless, we cannot assert that the merits of customary morality and its judgments were based on rational discrimination. Society trained its members to obey the customs of the clan by suppressing the individual liberty and sacrificing the individuality of every member at the altar of social welfare. Society thus turned its members as slaves of the society. Hence this mode of life could not be claimed as a supreme moral life.

(e) The Third Stage

The perennial rivers of Tamilakam attracted the people of the forest region. They gradually migrated into the river valleys from the forest tracts. On the banks of the famous rivers the people thronged together and built cities and towns with immense fortifications. They had a peaceful and prosperous life.The methods of irrigation and agriculture were their main occupations. They discovered the iron and used it for various purposes. They worshipped 'Ventan.' He has been identified with 'Intra'. This stage of culture is known as the Iron Age culture which is still in flourishing condition.

In this third and last stage of the development of culture and ethics, the moral life of man, gradually attained freedom from the despotism of customs. Moral life developed on the basis of the individual conscience and seems to have attained perfection in its great endeavour. Anyone can think, contemplate and decide whether an action is right or wrong, whether his action produces or increases happiness of the human beings.

The State became the supreme controller of all social relationships. It used to make laws and enforced them on its subjects. It also carried on various kinds of work that cannot be left to private enterprise. Trade and commerce with foreign

countries resulted in diffusion of cultures. Culture change resulted in borrowing or following blindly the habits and customs of the alien people. The acceptance of alien traits of culture gave an impetus to reworking or moulding the customs and moral code of the native people. This naturally led to the originality of appearance in greater or lesser degree.Traits which clashed with previous thought were rejected outright or soon dropped. On the other hand, those which are most closely allied to previous thought have attained prominence. Thus acculturation was on a mutual basis; which gave a synthetic approach to face the problems of life. Great thinkers and philosophers of this period came to the rescue of the people by framing moral laws, writing ethical treatise and interpreting the good old moral codes in the new light of acculturization.

These three stages of culture constitute not only the early pages of the history of the Tamils but also the history of mankind itself. The picture we get from Tolkappiyam and Cankam anthologies reveal that the evolution of the primitive stages of culture have been crystallized into a hoary tradition. Though these ancient Tamil classics are the products of well-developed Iron Age culture, there are a number of reminiscences which reflect predominantly the life and culture of the Tamils in the beginning of civilization.

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4. Tol. 951

5 (a) Ibid. pp. 18-20.

CHAPTER- II
THE BED-ROCK OF MORAL LIFE

(a) Akam and Puram

Ancient Tamils classified literature into two great divisions as 'Akam', the interior or the inner and 'Puram,' the exterior or the outer. This distinction is made on the basis of psychological and psychic experience. It may be said that Akam' denotes 'subjective' and 'Puram' represents objective poetry. These are the two great poetic approaches of the Cankam Age. The poems that speak of the happy union of the loving hearts which are personal and directly incommunicable human experiences, are known as "Akam' poetry. On the other hand, the poems that glorifies war, heroic exploits, philanthropy, evanescence of the world and Aram are called 'Puram' poetry. Life and activities pertaining to 'Akam' encouraged the happy and prosperous life at home, and the duties and activities of the Puram' restored the social harmony and the welfare of the state.

In the domain of Akam poetry, a subtle code of conduct is expressed under the veil of the literary convention. The poets maintained a cherished tradition in the Akam poetry that the names of the heroes and heroines should not be mentioned or particularised in any circumstances. The 'poetry of love' thus embraces the whole society in general and gained a supreme place in the Cankam classics. The lovers have been idealised and represented as unique personages. The poetry of love flowered as spotless idealistic poetry seeking after perfection in physical, moral, material, mental and spiritual aspects of human life.

In contrast with this poetry, 'Puram' or the 'Poetry of heroism' gives us a graphic picture of the personal experiences of man and his various activities. This does not mean that the scope of Puram poetry is a limited one. By laying stress and giving credit to the individual human experiences, and his blemishes, Puram poetry elevates itself to the higher region of spiritual values that have a universal appeal.

(b) The Role of Three Unities in Human Life

Ancient Tamils classified all under the sun into three great species viz. Mutarporul, Karupporul and Uripporul, which mean primary entities, germinating things and attributes or the psychological manifestations of human nature and the conduct of life.[2]These are the three unities of human life.

They traced the relationship between the various aspects and conduct of human life and the geographical phenomenon of the landscape in which they used to live. Hence they brought the space and time under the primary entities which constitute the 'trinity' or the three unities of human life.[3]

The entities which appear on land and in time goto make up the germinating things; the moral qualities that result from the actions of human beings on the spacious land and in the stream of time constitute the attributes.[4]

The first part of the primary entity i.e. the land has been divided into the five-fold regions which has been discussed in the previous chapter. The second part of the primary entity is the allotment of the six seasons and the six parts of a day to the five-fold regions which would be in quite harmony with the weather and climatic conditions of these regions.[5]

The products of time and space are called germinating things. They are god, food, fauna, flora, the inhabitants, their occupations, music and other objects that are indigenous to each region. The people and their chiefs of the each region are known by their special surnames.[6]There seems to have been exceptions to this and they are called as "regional interchange."[7]

Ancient Tamils had a high regard towards the Uripporul or attributes. This Uripporul implies action and thus form the third ingredient of the 'three-unities' that help human life to attain perfection. These moral qualities or conduct of life are divided into five' tinais' or situations; every 'tinai' is further subdivided into various aspects or themes called 'turais' or branches.

Usually Uripporul is divided into Akam and Puram. As we have noticed elsewhere, Akam is love, the sentiment of love based on the instincts of sex. This love has been considered under five subtle divisions in which the psychological reactions of the lovers would become visible. The five aspects of love are 'union' [கூடல்], 'separation' [பிரிதல்], 'resignation in separation' [இருத்தல்],'pining' or 'wailing [இரங்கல்] and sulking [ஊடல்] [8] and their relative states.

The lovers in each aspects of love affair had their peculiar and appropriate states of mind and behaviour governed by the surroundings, the periods of the day and the seasons of the year. All these phases or states of love could however be strictly adhered and a mingling of feelings and behaviour common to the whole mankind have been clubbed together into a harmonious blending of the magnificent noumenon of love.

Besides these five aspects of love, there are two other insignificant and unwarranted aspects namely Kaikkilai and Peruntinai which literally mean one-sided love or love without reciprocal complementation and the ill-assorted love or lust.[9]

According to Tolkappiyar, Akattinai is the counter part of Purattinai; they are the two sides of the same coin. Naccinarkiniyar, the commentator of Tolkappiyam compares Akam and Puram to the inner palm of the hand and its back.[10] Purattinai or Purapporul is nothing but Aram and political economy. Aram can be carried only with substance. Hence it has been affiliated with courage and chivalry. It is also divided into five aspects which depicts the various stages of war such as cattle-lifting or aggression, defence, resistance, battle and victory. There are also two other divisions which represent the ephemeral nature of the world and the glories and eulogy of the great men and of the heroes.[11]

Akam Puram

	(a) Flower	(b)Region	(c) Aspects of love		(a) Flower	(b) Stage of warfare.
1.	Kurinci (Strobilanthus Kunthianus)	Mountain	Union	1.	Vetchi (Flame of the forest	Cattle-liftingor Aggression.
2.	Mullai	Pastoral Region	Patiencein separation	2.	Vanci(Matavi)	Defence
3.	Marutam	River Valleys	Sulking	3.	Ulinai(A variety of cot-ton)	Resistance
4.	Neytal.	Coastal region	Wailing	4.	Tumpai(PhlornisIndica)	Battle
5.	Palai	Desert- like region	Separation	5.	Vakai(Mimasa flectuosa)	Victory
6.	Peruntinai	Common to all the five regions	raded aspects of love	6.	Kanc (Ulmusintegrifolia)	Contempla tion on theevanescentnature of the world.
7.	Kaikkilai	”	”	7.	Patan	The glories of the kings

These various phases of Akam and Puram are represented by the symbol of 'flowers' that are peculiar to each region or the stage of war. Every aspect of Akam and Puram except the Patan or the panegyric are named after a particular flower. The garland of a particular flower indicated the character and the stage of warfare and the feelings and frenzy of those engaged in them. The annexed table will show the seven aspects or phases of Akam and Puram.

Reference:

1. *"மக்கள்நுதலிய அகனைந் திணையும்*
   சுட்டி ஒருவர்ப் பெயர்கொளப் பெறாஅர்"
   -Tol.1000.
2. *Tol. 949*
3. *Tol. 949*
4. *Tol. 950*
5. *Tol. 951*
6. *Tol.966 to 968.*
7. *Tol.958, 959, 965.*
8. *Tol.960.*
9. *Tol. 951.*
10. *Tol. Introduction to Purattinai iyal; Nacc.com.pp.178-179.*
11. *Tol. Purattinai iyal.*

CHAPTER- III
THE CONCEPT OF ARAM IN TOLKAPPIYAM

(a) Various Aspects of Aram

The term Aram has been used in the earliest Tamil grammar in more than ten places. There is hardly any occurrence of this word in the first two parts of the Tolkappiyam except the one in the prefatory verse. Only in the third part of the Tolkappiyam, i.e. in Porulatikaram, Aram occurs in ten places. But there are several other references to the concept of Aram by some other terms like,

(1) Good conduct and virtue [ஒழுக்கம்],

(2) Path of virtue [நெறி],

(3) Consistency with the practice of the world [மரபு],

(4) Conventions and Usage [வழக்கு],

(5) Duty [கடமை], and

(6) Chastity [கற்பு].

The concept of Aram is explained in Tolkappiyam with five different meanings. In the prefatory verse the term appears to have used in its elevated sense as Moral virtue.[1] In the third chapter of the third part of Tolkappiyam, the author enumerates the higher human values in which Aram forms the basis. He says "of happiness, wealth and virtue, happiness is the result of pure love, having fivefold functions."[2] In this context, Aram represents the supreme end of human aspirations. Besides this, Aram has been used in this sense in the following aphorisms:

(1) Love, virtue, happiness and shyness are the
essential characteristics of a lady-love,
which may not be observed[3] in certain circumstances.

(2) Aram, wealth and happiness are the three main themes to the four kinds of poetry.[4]

In describing the householder's life, Tolkappiyar signifies Aram as the 'duties or the virtues of the householder.'First he emphasises the devotion to the duties of the householder'[5]and in another he refers to the kith and kin who are devoted to the practice of Aram in every walk of life.[6]

Aram also represents the established customs of the world in Tolkappiyam."That is not consistent with the established customs"[7]are considered to be beyond the scope of ethical usage: In another context Aram implies the established customs as in 'Though they yield fruit which are in contrary to the established customs might not be considered as improper to Aram.'[8]

Aram has been personified into a deity as God of Virtue [அறக்கடவுள்] whose main duty is to maintain virtue and vice in its proper sphere. This God of Virtue can be identified with the Greek Nemesis and Sanskrit Dharma Devata which has been discussed in detail elsewhere of this thesis.

Tolkappiyar makes reference to the God of Virtue'

In discussing the various aspects of the physical expression of the emotions of the violent lovers [பெருந்திணை], as accusing the 'God of Virtue,'[9] there is also another reading 'loving the Lord of Virtue'[10]which literally means 'the love-lorn lady's love for her sweet-heart."

There is another reference to Aram in Tolkappiyam which is very peculiar and significant in its meaning: The term Arattotuntrral [அறத்தொடு நிற்றல்][11] literally means 'devotion to duty'. Here it indicates the heroine's loyal constancy of love to her lover. In other words, the heroine's disclosure of her clandestine love affair is technically called Arattotunirralin Akam poetry of ancient Tamil literature.

In the course of true love, there will arise a stage in which the heroine could not keep her clandestine love affair for a long period. In that critical hour, she has to disclose the matter to her reliable friend and companion known as foster-sister. Afterwards the foster

sister who is very much interested in the welfare of the heroine, takes an active part in furthering their love, makes arrangement for the meeting of lovers. She used to keep their love secret from others till circumstances makes it necessary to reveal the state of affairs to her mother, the foster-mother of the heroine. This is known as Arattotu nirral.[12]

The foster-mother in her turn tells the mother of the lady-love about the love affair of her daughter. Then the mother informs her husband about the clandestine love of their daughter. These two stages are also called Arattotu nirral.[13]There are a number of references to this aspect in ancient Tamil literature. This kind of practice seems to have become a cherished literary tradition even before the age of Tolkappiyar. Arattotunirral clearly explains the value attached to chastity by ancient Tamils.

(b) The Interpretation of Aram

Now we will discuss the various terms which imply the various shades of meaning of Aram and interpret them in accordance with the commentaries of the Tolkappiyam.

(i) Good Conduct and Virtue

Moral virtue and good conduct are represented by the term olukkam (ஒழுக்கம்) in Tamil. It also implies behaviour, demeanour and decorum. Olukkam literally means incessant adherence or behaviour according to the canons of right conduct laid down for observance. In its elevated sense it has been generally used as Morality.

In Tolkappiyam, this term occurs in eighteen places of which, the first nine implies right or good conduct,[14] whereas the rest signifies the moral virtue.[15] On the whole it gives a clear picture of good conduct and behaviour in everyday life of the ancient Tamils.

(ii) The Path of Virtue

Every nation has its own peculiar customs and traditions which are formed by the life and experiences of their forefathers from generation after generation. This has been called the path of virtue,' which is represented in Tamil by Neri [நெறி]. Neri means way or path. Here it signifies the virtuous path paved by the life and activities of the great men.The path of virtue consists of two categories.They are code of laws in which the age old customs and traditions form part or and the other is the conduct of the virtuous men.

Tolkappiyar thinks that 'the hoary traditions could not be expressed by words with their connotative and denotative aspects.'[16] He makes reference to neri, twenty five times of which seven implies the path of virtue.[17]

In the third chapter of Porulatikaram, this neri has been expressed with attributes as 'Velan peru neri' [வேளாண் பெரு நெறி] which means the 'virtuous path of benevolence.[18] In another context it directly refers to the path of virtue as nanneri.[19] There is also two other references to neri which seems to imply 'approved course of conduct [முறை].[20] Neri also occurs twice in the sense of usage in Tolkappiyam.[21]

(iii) Consistency with the practice or usage of the world

Marapu or usage which has been the established customs of a country can be distinguished into two. They are the literary usages and the established traditions. Marapu occurs in about in nineteen places in Tolkappiyam. But only a single instance refers to the established customs of the world, and the rest refer to the literary usage."[22]

Tolkappiyar describes the nature of the cemetery as the symbol of the evanescence of life by remaining itself while many men die and pass away from the world.[23] This invoke the thoughts of the

people and remind them that oneday everything or being, that has origin and development in this world would perish.[24]Thus it will create the congenial atmosphere for the mental and moral attitude that would be inconsistent with the practice of the world.

(iv) Conventions

Conventions are based on the customs in practice of any society. Ancient Tamils had a keen interest in adhering to the established customs of the society. They had symbolised convention by the term Valakku [வழக்கு] which literally means usage. This also implies customs manners and good-old practices.

There are two kinds of conventions. They are the conventions of the society and the literary conventions.[25] Conventions are the customs observed by the great men. Why is it so? Because the whole world looks at them for the guidance.[26] The Valakku has been used in twenty-three places. In seven places it occurs in the sense of the convention of the society [உலகியல் வழக்கு] The rest implies literary convention.[27]

(v) Duty

The term katamai [கடமை] in Tamil implies duty, that which is fitting. In Tolkappiyam, this term has been used six times as duty[28] and four times that which is fitting to the occasion.[29]

In Tolkappiyam 'duty' implies the moral obligation of each and every individual in accordance with his station in life. It also signifies the performance of those activities that which is fitting for the occasion. There is no reference to munificence or liberality by the term katappatu in Tolkappiyam which has been frequently referred in the Cankam classics.

(vi) Chastity

Chastity has been considered as one of the superior virtue of the civilized society. Ancient Tamils had a keen interest in being chaste. The institution of marriage in itself reveals the concept and significance of karpu [கற்பு] in the life of every individual.

Tolkappiyam defines karpu as "the acceptance of the hands of a bride who is presented by her parents to the bridegroom in a ceremonial function set, up for the purpose.[30]

The commentators of Tolkappiyam have thrown some light on this concept which will be very useful to the study of the cultural and social anthropology of the ancient Tamils.

Ilampuranar, the earliest commentator of Tolkappiyam observes that "karpu connotes, the hero who is fully qualified in accepting the hand in open wedding, attended by ceremonial functions, of the lady-love who is in every way fit to be accepted by him, when she is presented by those who are entitled to give her away in marriage."[31]

Naccinarkkiniyar interprets karpu as "the teachings of the parents who usually instruct their daughters that there is no god for you superior than your husband; hence you must adore him as a God with great reverence and love." The husband also used to instruct his wife about the performance of the household duties. He will insist his wife, strictly to adhere to the obligations of the house holder towards the ascetics, saints and guests. This kind of instruction or teaching by parents and husband to the bride is called karpu."[32]

In Tolkappiyam karpu has been emphasised as a special and essential virtue for women. Modesty in women is considered more sacred and valuable than the soul and unsullied chastity is, held more sacred than even this modesty.'[33]Thus karpu has been defined, explained and illustrated in thirteen places in Tolkappiyam. It occupies a unique place in the moral philosophy of the ancientTamils.

Reference:

1. Pol. Prefatory verse: 10.
2. “இன்பமும் பொருளும் அறனும்என்றாங்கு
அன்பொடு புணர்ந்த ஐந்திணை மருங்கின்" - Tol.1038
3."அன்பேஅறனேஇன்பம்நாணொடு” - Tol.1161. Nacc.com.p.729
4. “அந்நிலை மருங்கின் அறமுதலாகிய
மும்முதற் பொருட்கும் உரியவென்ப” -Tol.1363. Peraciriyar.com.p.1119
5.“அறம்புரி நெஞ்சமொடு” - Tol.1093. Nacc.com.p.606.
6.“அறம்புரி சுற்றமொரு கிழவனும் கிழத்தியும்” - Tol.1138.Ibid.p.696..
7. "அறத்தொகு நிற்குங்காலத் தன்றி" Tol.1152. Ibid.p.715:
8. “அறக்கழி வுடையன பொருட்பயன் படவரின்
வழிக்கென வழாங்கலும் பழித்தன் றென்ப” - Tol: 1164.Ibid. p.386.
9. “அறனழித் துரைத்தல்” - - Tol.1216. Ilampuranar.com.p.386.
10. “அறனளித் துரைத்தல்” - Ibid Peraciriyar.Com.p.835.
11. “அறத்தொடுநிற்குங்காலத்தன்றி
அறத்தியல் மரபிலள் தோழிஎன்ப” - Tol.1152.
12. Ibid. - Tol.1152.
13. Tol.1060.
14. Tol.1061, 1081, 1082, 1092, 1096, 1106.
15. Tol. 1022,
16. "தொன்னெறிமுறைமைசொல்லினும்எழுத்தினும்
தோன்றா மரபின என்மனார் புலவர்” - Tol. 1192.
17. To1.981, 1011, 1021, 1054, 1060, 1192, 1464.
18. Tol.1060.
19. Tol.1092.
20. Tol.1011, 1021.
21. Tol.1057, 1590.
22. Tol.1025.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid. Nacc.com.p.315.
25. Tol.999.
26. Tol.1590.
27. Tol.980, 999, 1028, 1164, 1158, 1568, 1590.
28. Tol.1096, 1097, 1120.
29. Tol.37, 202, 545, 772.

30. Tol.1088.

31. Ibid.Ilampuranar.com.p.249.

32. Ibid. Naccinarkiniyar.com.p.564.

33."உயிரினும் சிறந்தன்று நாணே; நாணினும்
செயிர்தீர்காட்சிக் கற்புச் சிறந்தன்று" - Tol.1059.

CHAPTER- IV
DEVELOPMENT OF ETHICAL CONCEPT IN TOLKAPPIYAM

Tolkappiyam reveals that the role of Aram in the life of the ancient Tamils was a far-reaching one. The several aspects and practices of Aram has been clearly explained in this earliest Tamil grammar. In the second chapter of the 'Porulatikaram' i.e. in Purattinai iyal, we can get a glimpse of Aram in its various phases.

By analysing the various aspects of Vakaittinai,' the author have attempted to explain the rights and duties of the people in all walks of life.[1] Vaikaittinai deals with the special traits of moral behaviour which are innate in the various classes or the stratas of ancient Tamil society. Tolkappiyar asserts that there were ethical codes, which were the embodiment of moral ideals. He lays stress on the discharge of moral action in accordance with the moral codes as 'kattamai olukkattukannumai' [கட்டமை ஒழுக்கத்துக் கண்ணுமை]. [2]This implies that every individual should strictly act according to the principles of Aram incessantly in life and must quench the desires of the five senses. The moral ideals envisaged by Tolkappiyar can be distinguished as

(a) Duties of the householders,
(b) Duties of the ascetics,
(c) Ethics of Polity,
(d) Ethics of war and
(e) The Self-Realisation of Man.

(a) Duties of the Householder

Vakaittinai first deals with the six-fold duties of the Brahmans viz. learning, teaching, sacrificing, discharging priestly functions at sacrifices, alms giving and receiving gifts. Then Tolkappiyar enumerates the five-fold functions of the kings. They are learning, sacrificing, giving gifts, protecting the subjects, and crushing the wicked which is popularly known as war.[3]

The duties of the third and fourth divisions of the Tamil society as conceived by Tolkappiyar are learning,sacrificing, giving gifts, agriculture, tending cattle and trade.[4]In this classification, we hear the echo of the Aryan scheme of Varunasrama dharma, which was the bedrock of the Aryan social structure. Tolkappiyar seems to have attempted to apply the Aryan social scheme to the ancient Tamil society with some modifications.[5]

Besides these specially prescribed duties of the house holder, Naccinarkiniyar, the famous commentator of Tolkappiyam ascribes some other common duties of the householder on the basis of ethical codes. They are self-control,right conduct, impartiality, not coveting another's wife,non-coveting, freedom from back-biting, dread of evil deeds, non-envying and for bearing."[6]

(b) Duties of the Ascetic

He also explains four more subjects which shed some light on the duties and obligations of the ascetics. They are the functions of the spotless seers and sages who have attained the enlightenment of knowing, the past, present and the future.

The duties of the ascetics are eight-fold. Bathing [நீராடல்], sleeping on the floor [நிலத்திடை கிடத்தல்],clothing the skin [தோலுடுத்தல்], cherishing matted1ocks [சடை புனைதல்], performing sacrifice [எரியோம்பல்], living in the forest [ஊரடையாமை], feeding with the fruits, roots and herbs found in the forest [காட்டிலுள்ள உணவு கோடல்], oblations and worship of Gods [தெய்வ பூஜை], offering to the guests [அதிதி பூஜை] are said to be the duties and obligations of the ascetics.[7]

Naccinarkiniyar makes distinction between the ascetics who perform 'tavam'i.e. penance and those who used to indulge in 'yokam' or the silent contemplation, which is also known as the communion of the soul with the divine Master spirit. The practice of austerities ascribed to ascetics who perform penance are: free from the desire for food and water [ஊண் நசையின்மை, நீர் நசை],

forbearance of the inclemencies of weather [வெப்பம்பொறுத்தல், தட்பம்பொறுத்தல்],fixing the place and seat for penance [இடம் வரையறுத்தல், ஆசனம் வரையறுத்தல்], Speaking intermittent [இடையிட்டுமொழிதல்] and taciturnity [வாய்வாளாமை] [8]

The discipline of the yogis are narrated asself-restraint [இமயம்], observance [நியமம்], Posture [ஆசனம்], regulation of breath [வளி நிலை], withdrawal of five senses [தொகை நிலை], steadying the mind [பொறை நிலை], contemplation [நினைதல்] and 'meditative trance' [சமாதி]. These are said to be the eight limbs of yoga.[9] The purpose of the yogic practice is to assist man in the ascent from the narrow personal view congenital to him to the larger vision which brings freedom with it. The eight-fold discipline itself includes the disciplinary duties of the ascetic who perform penance.

The yogic discipline consists two stages. The first 'self-restraint' and observance are concerned with the right direction of the will, and represents the attainment of the goods as distinguished from the time. The niyamam or the self-restraint' is chiefly negative and consists of non-injury [இன்னா செய்யாமை], truth speaking [வாய்மை], abstention from stealing or misappropriation of other's property [கள்ளாமை, வெஃகாமை], celibacy [பிரமசரியம்], and renunciation or disowning of possessions [துறவு].

The niyamam or "observance' is positive. This includes purity [தூய்மை], contentment [அவாஅறுத்தல்], right aspiration [தவம்], gracefulness [அருளுடைமை] and Realisation [மெய்யுணர்வு]. These are considered to be, the pre-eminent moral foundation on which any yogic training should rest. This is somewhat similar with Naccinarkiniyar's first classification.[10]

The next stage consists of the remaining six, of which the first three acanam or posture, Valinilai or the regulation of breath, tokainilai or the withdrawal of the five senses are devised to secure the control of the physical frame with a view to facilitate the control of the mind. The last three yogic austerities Porainilai' or steadying the mind, ninaital or contemplation, samadi or

meditative trance assists in getting a direct but gradual mastery over the ever fitful mind. Thus this stage of yogic discipline cultivates the specific power of mental concentration on devotion to God.

(c) Ethics of Polity

Tolkappiyar, then deals with the various customs and practices, duties and functions of the kings during the time of peace and war. He gives a graphic account of the victors in battle and other victors in the drama of human life.

As we have noticed earlier, the kings were expected to perform the five-fold duties in their everyday life. They had to conquer their desire to enjoy the pleasures available in cold and summer seasons to take part in wars.[11]

Before we discuss the Ethics of War, it is interesting to note the several customs and lofty ideals of the rulers of the Tamil country. Ancient Tamil kings when they felt the ephemeral nature of the world and in certain cases of the political crisis, seems to have abdicated their thrones. They were the fountain head of Justice. They used to preside over the Council of Elders who possessed the eight important qualities namely:good birth, learning, good conduct, truth, holiness, impartiality, freedom from envy, freedom from selfish desires. Kings were expected to act in accordance with the law of Aram or moral law. They were hankering after the everlasting fame by their charitable activities.

Forgiving the faults of the subjects and redressing their grievances were the most important duties of the kings. Acquiring the wealth (which are the indispensable elements for the administration of the country) of soldiers, subjects, riches, ministers, fortifications and friends. And at last the mercy towards all beings which ultimately lead to the eternal bliss and subduing all forms of lust are prescribed as the duties of the kings.[12]

From this observation of Tolkappiyar, we can infer that the duties and obligations of the kings were not merely the

protection of their subjects and virtuous rule of the country, but also embraces, the moral, material and spiritual fields of activity of their subjects. By gradually enlarging the scope of the duties of the rulers ancient Tamils induced the kings to realize the vastness of their duties and responsibilities to all the living creatures of the world. They were thus forced to cultivate the supreme quality of reverence for life.

In Patan tinai, [பாடாண் திணை] the singing of praises by poets, Tolkappiyar narrates some more duties and customs of the kings. The birthday celebration of the kings is known as Perumankalam. On that day, the kings used to cancel the punishments given previously and bestow with boons to the artists and poets. Annual anointment of the kings which makes them famous is known as 'Mannumankalam' or bathing ceremony. Another important aspect of Patan is the praising the shade of the umbrella of the king which is the symbol of his virtues rule and his protection of his subjects and maintenance of law. This brings home that the foremost duty of the king is to look after the welfare of his subjects and the maintenance of law and order in the country. Then only the king deserves to be praised with his umbrella, the symbolic representation of his grace and virtuous rule.[13]

(d) Ethics of War

Ever since the birth of civilization until quite recent times, Tamilakam has passed through an endless cycle of wars and internal strifes. Kingdoms rose and fell in never-ending succession. Mighty kings swept across the land seeking wealth, territory and adventure.

Many causes of war have been attributed, but the basic cause of all is believed to be that man is the most pugnacious of all creatures. Social psychologists, hold that pugnacity "has been one of the essential factors in the evolution of the higher forms of social organisation and in fact, of those specifically social qualities of man,the high development of which is an essential condition of the higher social life."[14]

Thus the Hobbesian dictum that man is a fighting animal is fundamentally true."[15] There are two instincts of mankind viz. self-preservation and self-expansion that pervade the history of mankind. Right through the ages, man has always fought in response to one or other of, these two basic facts of his nature.

This led some scholars to magnify war as"the most sublime phenomenon of our moral life, a divine revelation more authoritative than the Gospel itself. The war-like people being the religious people, war is the sign of human grandeur."[16] This cherished illusion of war culminated in the drastic and devastatic global wars in the recent past, which have no analogy in the annals of the world.

The horrors of war, the sorrows and sufferings of humanity have stimulated the masterminds of this century to recognize war as an obsolete method of obtaining decisions.

Every one condemns that in war is the desire to harm, implorable, hate, the fury of reprisals, the passion for domination. This implies that war cannot be completely eradicated, but should be ennobled.

From the beginnings of history, each century has witnessed a war, more grim and devastating in its effect than the last, and despite the so-called march of civilization, atrocities are being perpetrated in modern times.

At first, man fought against man. Then he fought clan against clan. Still later he fought state against state. And the process continues even in this Atomic Age.

The history of ancient Tamilakam is one of almost continuous warfare, broken by occasional periods of short- lived peace. In the days of Tolkappiyar, the aims of war and the causes which ultimately drive to war were indeed many. The most important cause for war was the struggle for existence or defence. In order to defend the country and ensure peace and prosperity to the subjects, Ancient Tamil kings maintained a large and

efficient army. The mighty kings who wanted to exterminate the recalcitrant rivals and revolting vassals embarked on war with political motives.[17] Another important factor that resulted in war was the failure of the feudatory chieftains to pay tributes and owe allegiance to the supreme king of the country. Besides these causes, there was in vogue another important occasion for war which is known as the refusal to give maidens in marriage desired by the conquering monarchs.[18]

The immediate cause for war in ancient Tamilakam was the proverbial cattle-lifting of the neighbours. "But it must not be mistaken with the robbery of the Medieval and Modern Ages. It was the custom among ancient Tamil kings to mediate and avoid battle as far as they can maintain their sovereignty without any infringement and treated war as a last resort. Even then, they observed persistently and patiently the code of ethics in warfare.

Tolkappiyar elaborately deals with the various stages of war which were waged in accordance with the ethics of war. The first stage of war i.e. the cattle- lifting is known as Vetai. This lifting of cattle is explained by the commentators as a moral action, because when war has begun, non-combatants might flee for protection to fortified places, whereas cattle cannot seek refuge. Hence the king who declares war, begins by removing the enemy's cattle to place of safety in his own dominions.[19]

It is interesting to note that ancient Tamils have earmarked a particular season known as kutirparuvam' (roughly October to December) for expeditions and Venil paruvam (March and April) for making preparations and marching of the army for the expedition."[20] This reveals the humane outlook and chivalrous attitude of ancient Tamils. They did not disturb or interrupt the routine life of the people, especially the cultivation of the lands which has been the main occupation and source of revenue for the country. After the harvest season, they waged wars and used to stop in the midst, when that kutir season came to an end and renewed their fighting in the next summer (Venil) season.

These lofty ideals bears an ample testimony to the magnanimous attitude of ancient Tamils.

In the midst of the pitched battle, the warriors of ancient Tamilakam used to abstain from fighting against the indolent, the soulless, the retreating, the hermaphrodite, the weaponless, he who flies with clean shaved head, one who does not use equal weapons and such others."[21] This is another significant feature of war in ancient Tamilakam which is absolutely absent in the modern mode of warfare.

Even at the stage of winning the battle, ancient Tamil kings were reminded and exhorted by the competent and well-wishing poets and great men (Canror) about the evanescence of life, ephemeral nature of the world and induced them to realise the higher values of human life.

They were reminded of the glorious victories of the ascetics who have neither egoism nor the unquenching desire in the mundane affairs of the world. By celebrating the victory of the kings, the 'Canror' seems to have inculcated the principles to be adhered for the self-realisation of man.[22]

Thus the energies of the kings and warriors were directed through the channels of moral and spiritual activities which restored the general welfare and prosperity of the country. This supreme ideal of self-realisation of man has been explained to the victors along with the graphic description of the horrors of war or the transient nature of the world,[23] which disclosed the awful sufferings of the people and induced them to realise the noble ideal of true conquest consists in the conquest of men's hearts, by the law of Aram.

(e) The Self-Realisation of Man

In Kancittinai Tolkappiyar describes the evanescence of life and of the world in its several aspects. By elucidating the transient nature of the body, youth, wealth and pleasure, he induces the spirit of asceticism and turns the mind of the people towards the eternal bliss.[24]

Tolkappiyar gives a graphic description of kanci as violent manifestation of grief and denunciation of the transcience of love and life. Kanci is of two kinds, one deals with the activities of men, the other with that of women.[25]Each of these is sub-divided into ten kinds. Perunkanci, the great Kanci, is the proclamation of the inevitability of death; Mutukanci, the Kanci of the elder is old men teaching the young that youth will pass away soon; Marakkanci, the Kanci of valour and fortitude is a wounded man's consideration that it is natural to die and dying by tearing open his wound; Peykkenci, the Kanci of the demons, is the keeping watch during nights by demons of wounded soldier who has no relative to look after him; Mannaikkanci, the Kanci of the others, is the lamentation of other people accompanied by the description of the qualities of the deceased; Vancinakkanci, the Vowkanci in which a man takes a vow that if he did not succeed in an enterprize, he should give up his life or undergo such penalty; Totakkanci, the Kanci of refusal to touch, when the sweetly smiling wife of a wounded soldier will not let a demon guard him during night, nor touch him herself. These aspects of Kanci suggest the instability of affection and futility of relying on it.

Then Tolkappiyar describes Ancikkanci, the Kanci of fear, the wife feeling fear at the sight of spear-wound son the corpse of the husband, though she embraced the husband when he was alive, she turns away from him in disgust, now that he is dead.[26] This teaches another lesson on the instability of life.

Maketpalkanci is the refusal of heads of old families of soldiers to give their girls in marriage to kings (who come to fight for their lands) because that the lives of the kings are short and lastly a wife pressing the dead husband's head to her head and breasts and thus giving up her life.

Then the ten kinds of Kanci of women have been explained as the story of the pathetic life which are ended in tragic circumstances. The confused noise of the lamentations of relatives over a man who is dead after acquiring much fame, the unbearable distress of the wife alone, the description of the feelings of those that witness the death of the wife immediately after the death of the husband called mutanantam.

Another phase of instability of the life is illustrated by a lonely woman's lamentation for her husband who happened to die in a wilderness. This is known as mutupalaior the great separation.

Tolkappiyar then proceeds to describe the lamentations of relations and others describing the love of a husband and a wife who lost their lives. A husband weeping for his dead wife is called Taputaranilai and a wife weeping for her dead husband is known as Tapatanilai. Even in those days also, there seems to have been objection to sati. Tolkappiyar's statement that the lamentations of a wife, when she is prevented by her relatives from performing 'sati' bears ample testimony to this fact. A mother dying on learning that her son died like a hero is also considered as a theme of lamentation here. Lastly, Tolkappiyar, sings the glory of the cemetery which never perishes though many men die and pass away.[27]

In these observations, Tolkappiyar reiterates the ideal of salvation by laying emphasis on renunciation. He informs and instructs about the righteous path and ultimate reality in life. From these elaborate account of Vakaittinai and Kancittinai, we are inclined to think that ancient Tamils must have had the notion that the violent manifestation of grief and woes of life would imbibe the people that the earthly life and mundane pleasures are transient and direct them in the right path of moral life.

From the graphic accounts of the Tolkappiyam about the life and activities of ancient Tamils, Aram appears as the keystone of the arch of ancient Tamil society. It is not an exaggeration that if we say that Aram was the bed-rock of ancient Tamil society. Its

roots are lost in remote antiquity. Aram has played a predominant part in every aspect of human life. It seems to have concerned itself not only with men as individuals but also in aggregates. The various aspects of Aram reveals that its scope has been wide and universal. Its purpose have been worldly and other-worldly, concerned with this life and after life. The concept of Aram as described in Tolkappiyam suggests that life in the universe is endless chain, revolving round the wheel of action. It lays stress on individual responsibility as well as collective.

Ancient Tamil society was kept from disintegration by this sublime conception of Aram both individual and social, which gave its men and women a clear vision of the ultimate reality. It gave guidance to regulate their lives and mould their actions in order that they may in the fullness of time or even in this life itself trium phantly reach or attain the supreme goal of salvation.

Reference:

1. *Tol.1020.*
2. *Ibid. 1022.*
3. *Tol.1021. Nace.com.p.268-274.*
4. *Ibid. pp.276; 293.*
5. *P.T.S. Srinivasa Iyengar: History of the Tamils, p.212.*
6. *Tol. Purat. Nacc.com.p.293.*
7. *Ibid.Ilam.com.p.114.*
8. *Ibid. Nacc.com.pp.279-280.*
9. *Tol. 1021. Nace.com.p.280.*
10. *"செயற்கரிய வாவன: இயமம், நியமம் முதலாய*
    என்வகையோக வுறுப்புக்கள் நீரிற்பலகான் முழுகல்
    முதலாய நாலிருவழக்கில் தாபதபக்கமும்' என்பாரு
    முளர் அவை நியமத்துள் அடங்கலின்..."
    - *Parimelalakar's comments.*
    Tirukkural 26, p128,
    Uraikkottu,part I.
11. *Tol.1022.*
12. *Tol.1022.*
13. *"……..*
    திறந்த நாளணி செற்றம் நீக்கிப்
    பிறந்த நாள்வயிற் பெருமங் கலமும்
    சிறந்த கீர்த்தி மண்ணுமங் கலமும்
    நடைமிகுத் தேத்திய குடைநிழல் மரபும்" - *Tol.1037.*
14. *McDougall: Social Psychology, p.242.*
15. *"ஒருவனை யொருவ னடுதலும் தொலைதலும்*
    புதுவ தன்றிவ் வுலதத் தியற்கை" - *p.70.*
16. *George Whitehead: The Evolution of Morality, p.162.*
17. *Pol. 1007 and 1016.*
    "எஞ்சாமண்நசை வேந்தனைவேந்தன்
    அஞ்சுதகத்தலைச்சென்றுஅடல்குறித்தன்றோ?" - *Tol.1007.*
18. *"நிகர்த்துமேல்வந்த வேந்தனோடு முதுகுடி*
    மகட்பாடு அஞ்சய மகட்பா லானும்" - *Tol.1025.*

19. *"வேந்துவிடு முனைஞர் வேற்றுப்புலக் களவின்*
ஆதந்து ஓம்பல் மேவற்றாகும்" -Tol.1003.

20. *"கூதிர் வேனில் என்றிரு பாசறைக்*
காதலின் ஒன்றிக் கண்ணிய மரபினும்" - Tol.1022.

21. *Tol.Porul. Naec.com.pp.231-32.*
22. *Tol.1022. Nac.com.pp.293-294:*
23. *Tol. 1024.*
24. *Tol.1025. Nac.com.p.299.*
25. *Ibid. Nac.com.p.309.*
26. *Tol.1025.*
27. *Tol.1024. Nace.com.pp.301-316.*

BOOK –II
DEVELOPMENT OF ETHICAL THEORY IN THE CANKAM LITERATURE

CHAPTER I
THE CONCEPT AND CLASSIFICATION OF ARAM

The concept of Aram embedded in the Cankam classics are the prevailing opinions of the poets and bards of that Age. In the Cankam poetry, the personality of the posts casts its reflection, but it does not stand separate and distinct. The poets have chosen a subject matter recognized to be of universal importance and treating them with creative imagination and poetic fancy, conveying their life's message, through them which are at once personal and of universal appeal on vital and all-absorbing aspects of human experience. They are not impregnated with mystical religion; nor do they describe any theories which would impede the progress and development of mankind as a whole.

In the whole corpus of, the Cankam literature, the term 'aram' occurs in one hundred and, fifty seven places by the way of elucidating the various aspects of its content. It is evident from the study of Cankam literature that Aram has played a dominant role in the life and activities of ancient Tamils. The concept of Aram seems to have developed in its purport, enlarged in its sphere and covers the whole field of human activity. There are some stray cases of 'poetic vision' explaining the contradictions of the world and the life by giving importance to the shrieks and laughter of human life and trying to solve the riddles of life, by attributing the lot to the doctrine of karma, which might have been the effects of the intrusion of Jainism and Buddhism in the Tamil country.

Manifold are the topics that have been discussed under the domain of Aram in the Cankam classics. They are discussed in greater or lesser detail principally with the following subjects: the individuals in their relation to their station in life, their privileges, obligations and responsibilities;[1] marriage and all matters connected therewith;[2] the duties and responsibilities of the householders, viz. the duties of the parents and children; obligation towards the deceased, ancestors and relatives; the

worship of God; serving the sages and seers, hospitality etc.[3]; the status of women and their duties;[4] the moral codes of the rulers and the ethics of polity; judicial procedure and the sphere of substantive law such as crimes and punishments and the administration of justice;[5] the actions and avocations of the people;[6]sins and how to expiate them;[7] fruits of the deeds done in the past births[8] and the obligations, duties and responsibilities of the ascetics.[9]

A glance at the above list will convince anyone how the conception of Aram was a far-reaching one and how it embraced the whole life of man. The poets of the Cankam Age, had immaculate conception of Aram as a way of life, which regulated man's work and activities as an individual. They thought that the pursuit of Aram in every walk of life would bring about the gradual development of man and enable him to reach what has been deemed to be the goal of human existence.

In this period of Ethical development, the poets probed into the mysteries of human existence and envisaged a refined moral theory of prohibitions and prescriptions, enriched by the cherished traditions and empirical, wisdom. They made a subtle distinction and classified the concept of Aram into several aspects. They are:

(a) Good conduct and virtue,
(b) The Path of Virtue,
(c) Moral merit,
(d) Justice,
(e) Ethics of Polity,
(f) Ethical codes, and
(g) God of Virtue.

It will be clear and concise, if we treat these aspects of Aram in full detail under separate sections as classified above :

(a) Good conduct and Virtue

Aram in its general sense implies moral conduct and virtue. It has been considered as the good and opposite of evil. In Ainkurunuru, a specific reference is made to Virtue as opposite of evil. A loyal wife in spite of her sorrows and sufferings, wishfully prays for long-life to the king and prosperity to the world. She blesses:

"Long live Atan: long live Avini!
Let good increase and all ill cease!"
- A1.9.

Another heroine, explains the hardships she had courted during the elopement with her lover and blesses the hill that helped them en their way to hide from the notice of her kith and kin as "Let Virtue prosper! Let virtue prosper!"[10]These evidences indicate the conviction and conduct of the ladies of the Tamil country in the Cankam Age.

A nurse, in her anxiety, (in searching her daughter who had eloped with her lover), requests the seers whom she happened to meet on her way as to whether, they have seen her daughter on their way. She requests them:

"The revered Seers! Well versed in Vedas!
That express the lofty ideals of Aram;
I bow before thee! Have you seen
My damsel with resplendent armlet:"[11]

A lady-love in her pangs of separation asks her companion whether the wealth is very precious or valuable than leading a virtuous life?[12] In this reference, the term 'Aram' implies the good conduct that is indispensable for the virtuous life.

A hero, on his return journey from his great enterprise, cherishes in dreaming about the reactions of his sweet-heart. He imagines that at this time she may express her unbearable sufferings of separation in a few words to her companion as

"Our lord has no regard for Aram."[13]This is an ample proof for the reverence they had for Aram.

A wife in separation wishes that her husband should succeed in his enterprise of acquiring wealth. She recollects the words which he expressed at the time of his departure to justify his action. She repeats those words and expresses them to her companion with great distress and dissatisfaction: "the virtuous and the wealthy life that never drive you to beg at the doors of others can be secured only by acquiring wealth."[14]

In the same circumstances, a companion consoles the heroine by reminding the noble ideals of her lord. She says: "Our lord has gone to acquire wealth in order to live a virtuous life, strictly adhering to the path of Aram and to promote the welfare of our kith and kin."[15] From these references, the acquisition of wealth appears to have been an important and indispensable duty of moral life.

Besides this, there are two other references to Aram in Akananuru which are very helpful in elucidating this aspect of Aram. A hero thinks about the prospects of securing the hands of his lady-love. At last he comes to the conclusion that it is his duty to adhere to the path of virtue. So he decides to marry the girl by any means, even by becoming a servant to her father.[16]

Another poem depicts the realisation of responsibility and the presence of mind of a companion of a heroine. She advises the hero not to deviate from the path of Aram and Porul, when he leaves the heroine in the midst of their clandestine love affair.[17]

In'Puram poetry', there are copious references to the moral conduct and Virtue. There appears to have been a curious custom among the kings and warriors. Auvvaiyar, in one of her laudatory verses refers to this peculiar custom. She observes:

"When an ignoble king turns his back in the battlefield and dies a natural death by disease, prominent men who are learned in the Vedas and desire Aram embrace his corpse by forgetting their love

towards the dead in order to remove the evil of the wrong action, and spread the green grass full of power, place the dead body on it and say that the dead may go to Heaven, where the brave warriors who fell at the battle-fields by clinging to their heroism may be found and cut the body with the sword and bury it.[18]

In this poem, specific reference is made to the Vedic scholars and their moral temperament. Here Aram implies not only good conduct but also righteousness or Dharma.

As we have noticed elsewhere, the great hero and one of the Seven Patrons of letters has been praised by the poet Mutamoci, for his noble principles. The poet asserts that his greatness lies in his humanitarian outlook and in his high sense of duty. He never does any good with 'mercenary motive' in order to secure the reward in the next life or birth. But his liberality has deep-rooted in his principle of following the virtuous path paved by the great men that 'good should be accomplished for its own sake.'[19]

Chola king Karikalan has been described as "the great hero who destroyed many forts in war and along with his companions and bards who have gathered around pots of liquor and drank up many potful of liquor.In the assembly of the great who had mastered Aram, those who were well versed in the methods of Vedic sacrifice, guided the conduct of ceremonies."[20] This view is also expressed in Patirrappattu."[21]

'Tayankannatar of Erukkattur in his appeal to the king Killivalavan who died at Kulamurram, gives a graphic account of the prosperous state of the Cola country. He describes: "……

Thus showering blessings in the bounty like rain,
Thou dost with costly gifts relieve my pain,
That burn like glow of scorching summer-sun
Lord of thy land wherever shine the fires
Lit by the sages, who six works perform And
Virtue's work maintain……"[22]

One important point that draws our attention in Purananuru is the usage of the Sanskrit term 'Dharma'instead of the Tamil term Aram.[23]There is hardly any such usage in other Cankam classics, except the one found in Paripatal which denotes Yama, the god of death.[24]

A poet describes the damsel desired by the conquering monarch as one who strictly adheres to the law of Dharma.[25]

Kappiyan of Karyaru pays tributes to the conjugal fidelity of the queen of the Cera king Kalankai narmuti-e-ceral. The poet describes the chastity of the queen as that which is enriched by Aram.[26]Though the virtue of the ladies generally considered as an aspect of Aram, in this reference it has been praised that the chastity of the, queen has attained perfection in its full sense of the term. This is one of the most important aspects of Aram for which ancient Tamils had a great regard.

Kapilar, one of the prominent poets of the Cankam Age, extols the characteristic features of the Cera king Celvakkatunko Väliyatan as "the patron of the Brahmans whose tongue has become lucid by chanting the scriptures of Aram."[27]

Here the term Aram apparently implies Vedas. The quintessence of the Vedas are considered as Aram. In the prefatory verse to the seventh decade of Patirruppattu,' the domain of Aram has been expressed as Aratturai.[28]From this reference, it is quite evident that the concept of Aram has been separately studied and elaborately discussed in those days.

In 'Kalittokai,' a companion of the heroine,persuades the hero to stop his journey to the far-off land. In her introductory remarks, she warns that the heroine feels shy to hear the uncharitable remarks loudly made by the village folks, and if he deserts her, she would become emaciated by the pangs of separation."[29]

A nurse of a heroine inquires the sage whom she meets in search of her daughter, who has eloped with her lover. She humbly requests him whether he has seen a young couple on his way. He tries to console the grief-stricken lady in an impressive way:

"The multi-fragrant sandal benefits those who apply it, and though it is born on the hill, confers, no benefit to the hill.

The peerless pearl benefits those who adorn themselves with it and though born of the ocean, confers no benefit to the ocean.

The music that comes from the seven strings rejoices those who play on them, and though born of the lute, confers no blessings on the lute."[30]

The sage impressively concludes after each 'strophe' that such is the state of her daughter and explains that she would attain her end only in marriage, and by remaining single in her own home, she would be like the sandal wood on the hill, pearl in the unfathomed caves of ocean, and the music that lie hushed in the lute which are no use to man, so long as they are not made available to him. After consoling the nurse by these soothing words, he advises her "not to feel sorry for the lady of noble virtue who had gone with her revered husband" and asserts that "it is the path of 'Aram', that is to be pursued persistently by the ladies."[31] In this context, Aram signifies the moral conduct with special reference to the virtue or chastity. To live with her lover or husband, has been, highly spoken of as the duty of the woman.

A lady-love requests her lord to take her alone with him in his pursuit of wealth in a foreign land. The hero gives a graphic picture of the dreadful region that he has to cross in his journey, reminds her, the tenderness of her feet, sweetness of her words and her graceful nature. Then he persuades his spouse to change her decision.

The lady repeats the words of her husband and says to her husband that "you have expressed these words in accordance

with Aram and out of overwhelming pity towards me."[32] Another heroine has been,consoled by her companion in the absence of their lord. The companion says that their lord had gone to acquire wealth without realizing his separation from his wife would be beyond the scope of Aram.[32(a)] This implies that even by negligence, one must not do harm to others and having no pity for other's sufferings are considered as a moral action.

In another Kali ode "the growth of trees on the banks of a river" has been compared to "the wealth of a philanthropist who gives liberally and leads a virtuous life by persistently following the lofty ideals of Aram."[33] By this allusion, the poet instructs that the duty of the rich is to be useful to others. If the rich realize their duty and help others, then their wealth would increase as an unfailing source. This is the proper way to utilize their wealth which is in quite harmony with the ideals of Aram.

An ideal husband has been characterized as the persistent lover of Aram.[34]Every action should be in accordance with the moral, percepts seems to have been the motto of the ladies of ancient Tamilakam.[35]

It is interesting to note an episode that resembles more or less like a short story which lays stress on the three values of human life.

A hero decides to confess his love towards a girl publicly after he had encountered defeat in securing her hands. So he prepares to stride the palmyra horse. In this situation he happens to meet the Canror or the Magnanimous men of that town. He requests them to help for his cause. He expresses his wish to them. He praises them as gracious men who feel the pain of others as their own and who cling to the ideals of Aram as their duty.[36]

From another poem of this anthology, we are able to know the rest of this story. The Canror and the wayfarers who happened to witness the horrible scene of self-torture of the hero who gives ultimatum before striding the palmyra horse. They notice the

yielding of the heroine's relatives to give her in marriage. In this context, they reprove the attitude of both the parties and express that the steps taken by the hero who have known fully well that his action is not in quite harmony with the three values of human life viz. Aram', 'Porul' and 'Inpam'.[37]This expression implies that it is not worthy to go beyond the scope of Aram to achieve one's object in life. From this we can infer that the dictum end justify the means was not favoured and. patronized by ancient Tamils.

In 'Paripatal,' the poet perceives the beauty of Nature as the manifestation of God Tirumal, which is expressed in sublime, vivid, soul-stirring and delicate language, which could not be rendered with full-effect in any other language:

"Of the fire, thou art the heat;
of the flower, thou art the fragrance;
of the stone thou art the lustre;
Of the word thou art the truth;
In Aram, thou art the loving-kindness;
In Valour thou art the strength"

-Pari.3:63.

Then the poet proceeds to sing the glories of Tirumal as:
Thou art with povai flowers that never fly
Thou art ruling the whole Universe,
With the gracious umbrella and the sceptre of Aram,
Spreading the shade of peace,
which makes the world prosper!"

- Pari.3: 73-76.

This poem suggests that Tirumal is the supreme lord and his manifestations are revealed as various phenomena of Nature in

the world. In the domain of ethios or in the vital aspects of Aram, the loving-kindness [அன்பு] is considered as the foremost quality of Aram. It also implies that God is the embodiment of love who showers his bounty on all the creatures of the world and in return he anticipates the loving-kindness of man as the token of his devotion towards him in spite of practicing the various arduous tasks of penance This also brings home, that and other practices, it is sufficient to pursue the path of Aram with loving-kindness towards all which is the chief and significant quality of God.

The poet also thinks that God, as the king of the Universe, whose virtuous rule promises prosperity to the world. It is very interesting to note that even the Lord is identified with the king with the sceptre of Aram which is the symbol of virtuous rule. Here the poet turns to be a devotee and admires God as the real protector of righteousness in the world which reminds us the proverbial remark made by Nammalvar as "If I see the gracious king, I am very much delighted as I have seen the Lord Vishnu.[37a]

In this same manner another poet addresses Tirumal as:

Thou art the attributes of the five senses –
Taste, music, sight, smell and touch;
Thou art the sensory-organs that hold the senses!
In the list of the senses five
Thou art the first heard in the sky;
Thou art the second felt in the breeze;
Thou art the third shines in the flame;
Thou art the fourth tasted in the water;
Thou art the fifth scented in the earth!
Thus the twenty one worlds, elements
And Aram evolved from you, My lord"

- Pari.13; 14-25.

This poem clearly explains the ultimate source of Aram as God. Hence God has been considered as the incarnation of Aram and Vice is the quality of the Satan that dwells in man.

Tirumal has been described by this same poet as the "Lord "who is very subtle in Sruti, Knowledge along with Aram."[38]

Katuvan Ilavayinar contemplates upon the heroic and the righteous indignation of Lord Murukan. In his, concluding remarks he gives a list of those who seek the grace of God and those who never care for it:

> "Men of sober conduct, great sages and devotees
> who cling to the path of Virtue would yearn for
> they grace!
> The fire of wrath that burns in the minds of men
> would discard virtue. They are the fools who
> utter that there is no rebirth and never seek
> the grace of Murukan.'
>
> - Pari.5: 71.1

> At last, the poet earnestly prays:
> "Hence I adore you my lord!
> Neither for the riches, nor for the gold.
> And never for the pleasure;
> But for the three -
> Thy grace, love and Virtue:"[39]

The Brahmans are distinctly mentioned as 'Aravor'; i.e. the gracious men in another verse of Paripatal.[40]A specific reference is made to Brahmans who are well versed in Vedas and Dharmasastras. Their colony is well known as the abode of Aram.[41]

Besides these references, there is a significant reference to ladies as 'the guardians of Aram.'[42]. This implies that the ladies had a keen interest in safeguarding their chastity and other cherished qualities of womanhood.

In ancient Tamilakam, every one aspired to lead a virtuous and moral life. But in practice, men in general seems to have gone astray. They were haunted by the public women who with their mastery over fine arts and, by their voluptuous beauty captivated the minds of the young and rich in the country. Thus the, institution of prostitutes gradually came into vogue. Paying visits to the brothel houses was the fashion of the day. So the fidelity of conjugal love could not be emphasised as a virtue among men. Hence the family ladies who had meticulous care in safeguarding their chastity, are called the 'guardians of Aram' which illumines their virtuous conduct and character.

There are only a few references to Aram in Pattuppattu. Nakkirar, the mystic poet of Tamil country guides the humanity as a whole to seek salvation by visiting and worshiping Lord Murukan at the sacred places where he seems to have enshrined. He directs to those places to be graced by Lord Murukan. In describing those sacred places, the poet gives a graphic account of Tiruverakam, one of the six important shrines of Murukan.

"The Brahmans failing not in duties six
On both sides famed for long and high descent
Their good youth spent for eight and forty years,
In Vedic path and teaching Aram always
And tending sacred fires of three different forms

- Pat:1:177-181.[43]

Nakkirar mentions that the Brahmans are well known for their teaching of Aram. 'Naccinarkiniyar,' the commentator of Pattu-p-pattu describes these lines by attributing the characteristic features ordained by the Dharmasastras to the Brahmans He explains the first two stages of Varnasrama dharma and the performance of sacrificial rites with the aid of fire-cult.[43 (a)]

Kapilar describes the union of the yearning hearts of the romantic lovers in 'Kurincippattu'.The companion of the lady-love discloses the clandestine love affair of the heroine to her mother. In the course of her narration of the various circumstances that encouraged the love between the heroine and her sweet-heart, the companion, says that the"chief of these beautiful highlands, noticing the shyness on my lady's part, which was due to the fact that she desired legal marriage before the consummation of their love,praised the duties and joys of a married life. Then he prayed to God Murukan and swore before him that he would never be unfaithful to his first love. Thus quoting ' Aram' as an authority, banished her fear and hesitation and in ratification of his oath, drank the water of the stream."[44]

It is interesting to note that even in the midst of love-affair which is said to be blind, ancient Tamil lovers had not only a high regard for Aram, but also obeyed the divine imperative of Aram. This bears an ample testimony to the fact that the ancient Tamil society had a sound foundation which is not the blind passion but chaste love on which seems to have rested the happy and moral life, of the society.

The life and activities of the citizens of 'Pukar,' the great emporium of trade in the early centuries of the Christian era has been portrayed vividly in Pattinappalai. The poet describes "the great feeding house in which Aram remains permanently, which is well fortified with walls and doors embossed with the emblem of tiger. This charitable institution has established service and benevolence to mankind and the praise of their fame is ever on the increase."[45]

The poet praises the feeding house as the 'abode of Aram."It seems that Aram has been used in the sense of charity. Feeding the poor and the destitute is considered to be one of the important aspect of Aram in all countries and in all ages. It is quite appropriate to quote the definition of Aram, sponsored by 'Manimekalai,' the first (lady) humanitarian of Tamilakam. She exhorts:

"If you want to know what is Aram, listen to me without fail. I know not except providing food, dress and abode to the living creatures of the world as Aram.[46]

The modern concept of the "Welfare State" ideal has been expressed by Manimekalai as Aram. Of the three dire necessities of life, food is the first and most important requirement for the livelihood of human beings. So it has been considered that feeding the poor as the supreme aspect of Aram.

In a great and prosperous city like 'Kaviri-p-pumpattinam,' the capital of the Cola kingdom, the feeding of the poor and the destitutes appears to have been considered as the foremost duty of the citizens of the city. Hence they have built a huge house for feeding, which never fails in its duty. This seems to have impressed the poet 'Uruttirankannanar' of Katiyalur, who cherishes by describing the feeding house as the 'abode of Aram.' This reference stands as an unfailing evidence to the enlightened concept of Aram as conceived by ancient Tamils.

(b) The Path of Virtue

Besides these direct references to Aram, there are a large number of references to the 'Path of Virtue' of which a few may be illustrated here. The path of virtue has been considered as a sacred and significant one, through which every individual should strive to attain the pleasures of life in this world and the pursuit of bliss' in the next.[46] Life that clings to the path of virtue has been considered as normal. The conception of the path of virtue seems to be relative to the moral standard of the changing circumstances of the society in general. But its higher aspects remains to be a universal law of life.

In ancient Tamilakam, the people thought that the life of a lady with her lover as a life that never deviates from the path of virtue. A nurse in her grief at the elopement of her daughter with her lover, says that "her young girl with the crescent like forehead has chosen the real path of virtue and so she had gone with her lover:"[47]

A Heroine rebukes the scandal-mongers of the village who spread loudly her clandestine love affair, as those who never cling to the path of virtue.[48]This suggests that the scandal-mongering and blaming others are not desirable and also they are contrary to the virtues of humanity in general. Hence, the people who feel pleasure in that art are looked with a condescending air and considered as those who never care for Aram.

The pleasures of married life and the happy union of lovers are compared to the pleasures that results from the life that clings to the path of Aram in one of the' Narrinai' verse.

A Hero consoles his wife, when she began to weep for his parting. He persuades her to realize the obligations and responsibilities of the householder:

"Oh! My lady of sweet words!Your graceful complexion resembles gold and the fragrant tresses like the gem,your lovely eyes touched with collirium', resembles the bud of the lotus [நீலம்] and your elegant arms look like tender bamboo stalks. The glance at your fascinating felicity delights me with thrills of joy and I feel as happy as the persons who persistently pursue the path of virtue. Besides these our beloved son with gold bangles has learned to play. If I patiently think over the charms of life that I have been bestowed, my heart knows no bounds and above all these joys of life, the love that I entertain for you is greater than the wide sea. Then, is there any need for me to part from you?"[49]Hence it is quite true,"that the proverbial saying that 'Vitu" [வீடு] , theeternal bliss is the elevated form of the pleasures of life endured in a sweet home [வீடு] in this world.

A significant verse in 'Akananuru' depicts a graphic picture of the pathetic reactions of a house-wife while she merely guessed that her lord may leave her for a business tour. The departing husband after noticing his helpless wife becomes increasingly tender. Then he addresses himself:

> "My loyal wife scented my plan of going abroad
> to acquire wealth, though she actually spoke nothing
> to-day. She showed by her gestures and facial
> expressions that such a separation would not be in
> harmony with the path of virtue, by, standing
> besides me as a still painted picture in a
> reflective mood with dewy tears hiding the image
> in the 'pupil' of her eyes. She embraced the son
> in her arms and smelled the flower wreath that
> adorned the tiny head of the child, which at once
> lost its freshness and. lustre. After noticing
> this pitiful condition of my wife who is very
> much worried even in my presence, I thought that
> she won't survive if I leave her for my pursuit
> of wealth. So I determined to postpone my departure."[50]

This poem is a unique example for the naturalness and exquisite beauty of the Cankam poetry that explains the feminine psychology in a realistic way. The tender-hearted husband realises that it is not charitable on his part to make his beloved to suffer in his absence. He reads from the facial expressions of his spouse that his decision would not be in harmony with the path of Aram. This not only reveals the loving kindness of the couple but also bears testimony to the moral fervour of ancient Tamils in discharging their household duties without negligence.

In Kalittokai a large number of proverbs, adages and maxims are used as allusions and metaphors to explain the various aspects of life and thought. The youth of the poor could not be bright one is the well-known truth which has been expressed as an allusion to, the paleness of an heroine who could not bear the pangs of separation. This is also emphasised by another statement in the same 'Kali' ode. The poet says the old age of a man who never adheres to the path of virtue would be a tragic tale."[51]

There is an interesting and important list of virtues narrated in the following verse that sheds some light on the cardinal virtues of ancient Tamils:

> "The Sun is disappearing on the western Hills,
> And darkness comes stealing on little by little,
> And the mental darkness of the hateful man
> Void of love, virtue and moral deeds.
> The trees love their flush, as the mind of a man
> who induced by dire poverty seeks alms,
> And close their leaves, as the miser who at sight
> of him closes his heart and
> conceals himself."[52] - K.120.

The poet by mere allusions, conveys the message of love of mankind, the seeking of their welfare, relieving the distressed and the needy from their difficulties and non-injury to others in the introductory portion of the poem itself. In short, he expresses that a worthy life is that which is lived in accordance with the path of Aram. By describing the attitude of the inanimate beings the poet inculcates and instructs the ideal of Aram.

'Marutan' of Mankuti, the poet-laureate of Pantiyan Netunceliyan describes the various aspects of life and activities of the people of the city of Maturai in ope of the great 'masterpiece' of ancient Tamil literature called Maturaikkanci, [மதுரைக்காஞ்சி]. He describes the colony of the Brahmans in a realistic manner:

The poet takes us to the abodes of the Brahmans which are studded, like hills from which springs the chanting of the Veda's. He shows the good old Brahmin sages who have gained the bliss of heaven after leading a unique life of the householders, fix their mind in the future world itself. By pursuing the virtuous path of Aram and reverence for the life of other creatures, share their bliss with other great sages who have secured salvation."[53]

Then the poet introduces the householders."Both the husband and wife never fail to adhere to the path of Aram and walk persistently in that path with great pleasure who live in fair mansions."[54]

The foregoing observations reveal the, perseverance and certitude of ancient Tamils in adhering to the path of virtue in all walks of life. In those days there was a custom in ancient Tamil society, to designate those who deter from the path of virtue as Aranili [அறனிலி], which more or less similar to the modern usage of the term Ayyokkiyan'. The lady-love, her companion, and her nurse very often used to blame the Hero as 'Aranili'[55] or 'Aravan allan' [அறவன் அல்லன்].[56] These terms imply in this context that the hero is not behaving or hesitates to do anything in accordance with the customary morality of those days.' In this same manner, the heroine very often abuses her mother as 'Aranil yay' [அறனில் யாய்][57]when she was strictly watched by her mother or when she was forced to stay at home during the period of her clandestine love affair.

In certain cases, when the maid blames the Hero, at once the Heroine would come to the rescue of her lover, assert that he is a 'gracious man who strictly pursues the path of virtue,'[58] as 'one who desires Aram always'[59]and as 'virtuous man'[60]. Occasionally the heroine in her grief rebukes the phenomena of Nature and birds as (non-virtuous.)." A heroine, in the absence of her lover feels very much worried by the incessant flow of the North wind. She tells her Maid that "this non-virtuous North wind which strikes us without any consideration, may go and tell our sweet- heart that in the fair mansion of yours, the lady-love lost her beauty and emaciated. So the series of bangles began to move freely on her arms.[62]

The terms Aravar [அறவர்] and Aravor [அறவோன்] are very often used to denote sages and seers,[62] Brahmans and those who perform virtuous acts.[63] A strange and significant reference is made by the term 'Aravon' [அறவோன்] in Narrinai.A doctor who has given proper remedy by his careful diagnosis is called as Aravon.[64]So it is clear from the above references that the term 'Aravor,' first seems to have denoted those who live a life in accordance with the moral codes or the established customs and conventions of the society. Then it gradually began to represent those who perform virtuous or good deeds that promote the welfare of humanity.

(c) Moral Merit

Aram also implies 'moral merit' and 'moral action' which are the two sides of the same coin, the cause and effect. Moral merit results from the practice of virtues like temperance, charity, kindness and compassion that constitute goodness. Hence it is called in Tamil as 'nalvinai' [நல்வினை].

The practice of virtues, is known as moral action. This is represented by the term 'Aravinai' [அறவினை] in Tamil. Moral action implies conscious responsibility on the part of any individual for his actions. Freedom is essential for moral action. If a man chooses a course of action in accordance with the directions of his free will, then he is ethically responsible for his actions.

Moral action is known by various names which are given to the different deeds of the moral agent in different circumstances. Charity is popularly known as the supreme kind of moral action. The famous maxim that 'charity begins at home' is true in all ages and in all countries. Ancient Tamils were not an exception to this. The basic aim of the householder's life according to the Tamils is to be helpful to others by performing the six-fold duties of the family life. This supreme aim of married life can be illustrated profusely from ancient Tamil literature.

Every married couple had great interest in discharging their duties of family life efficiently and elegantly. One of the Kali ode, gives a graphic and picturesque account of this supreme aim of ancient Tamils in their everyday life. A mistress of the home feels love-sick in her separation from her lover. Incidentally, she recollects the piece of advice that was given by her husband at the time of his departure and consoles herself by repeating:

"Giving in rare charity to those who come beseeching,
His foes, by a victor's strength, subduing,
And living in a union of love, formed in former life,
Thinking these his duty, my lover who left in search of wealth
While he returns soon, you think, my dear,
I think so now hear."[65]

In this versê, the unique value of Porul (wealth)has been expressed in elucidating the three values of human life. Aram here implies moral action, which is considered as the foremost duty of the householder.

It seems that ancient Tamils besides discharging their duties of the daily life, have chosen a particular month in the year and recognized that month as auspicious for the charitable activities. This ancient tradition has been expressed as an allusion by Perunkatunko,a poet who has established his name and fame by his realistic and picturesque description of the desert-like region.

While the lovers on elopement, the hero makes his sweet-heart to forget the weariness of the tedious journey by showing the charming sceneries of Nature. He points out: "Look there how the elephant throws its arm around its mate and feeds her along with its baby the tender golden flowers of Venkai (Pterocarpus marsupium). Your father's forests that are adorned with clusters of Konkam [கோங்கம்] flowers which looks like the series of lights that illumine the highlight of the festival of lights in the month that ascribed to Pleides [அறுமீன்] which is considered to be appropriate and auspicious for the moral activities.[66]

'Moral action' requires arduous and persistent practice of Aram that would in due course accumulate the moral merit. [67]Indulgence in drinking has been scornfully treated as an immoral action.[68]

Living with one's own wife is also considered as a moral action or duty of the men in, general. 'Paranar,' the prominent poet of the Cankam Age persuades 'Pekan,' to return to his lawful wife Kannaki whom he had condemned to a life of loneliness by his fascination towards another lady. The poet upbraiding Pekan and interceding on behalf of his lawful-queen, requests him:

"O Peka! the Lord of the vast army of elephants! Who have earned an everlasting fame by presenting your regal mantle to graceful peacock on your hill sides appraised by its sharp cry, thinking that it is quivering in the chill winter wind. Listen to me, my Lord! I did not come to you, because I feel hungry or with an unbearable burden of kith and kin that die from privation. The request that I made to you for the boon with my little lyre harping in tender strains that move those interested in music as, 'you lover of compassion!. bless me with Aram!' is not intended for my welfare. Let your mighty chariot with twinkling bells move from this place to night itself to drive the sufferings of your spouse who patiently endures the bitter experiences of life because no love is hers. This is what I seek from you as a boon my lord:"[69]

Another poet expresses his gratitude to the chief of the Venkata hills. The poet praises him for his liberality which has been the aim of the chief as a moral duty in his life.[70] Kings and patrons of artists and poets were well known for their moral action in those days. Nakkirar boasts himself as the friend of Cattan who had earned everlasting fame by his moral action."[72] These references clearly indicate that the unstinting liberality was considered as a supreme aspect of moral action.

In the fag-end of the Cankam Age, the performance of sacrifice by Brahmans was also known as a moral action.[73]

The fruits of moral action are called ‘nalvinai' i.e. moral merit and the ill-effects of the amoral actions are known as 'tivinai' [தீவினை]. To acquire the fruits of moral action, everyone must discharge their duties by strictly adhering to the path of virtue. The ill-effects of the amoral action is blamed as that which never yield any fruit.[74]

A significant reference is made to the fruits of the moral action in Kalittokai. A Hero appeals in his frenzy to the crowd that has thronged to see the horrible scene of self-torture of the Hero by striding the palmyra horse. He requests them to persuade the parents of the heroine to concede to (his request) give their daughter in marriage to him. If they go and persuade the parents of his lady- love, that would give them the fruits of the moral action.

Though the ancient Tamils were well known for their military exploits and internecine warfare, their devastating and destructive activities were not encouraged by the great men. They deliberately expressed their regrets to the kings and told that the destructive actions of the aggressive rulers were not worthwhile and morally good.[76]

Ancient Tamils had a soft-corner in their heart for those who have helped them in their straitened circumstances. By laying emphasis on the expression of gratitude as an important aspect of moral conduct, a poet known as ‘the baron of Alattur,' refers to the dreadful moral actions:

“Those who do not care for moral merit, have cut off the duct of the cow, or have destroyed the foetus in the wombs of jewel be-decked women, or behave harshly towards religious instructors, after a careful consideration of their offence may find means to cleanse themselves from it;but for him who even though the world were over-turned, forgets the benefit he has received, there is no redemption; It has thus been said in Ethical treatise."[77] This clearly explains the importance attached to the sense of gratitude by ancient Tamils which bestows moral merit to the agent. In this same manner Valluvar has expressed that "He

who has killed every virtue may yet escape, there is no escape for him who has killed a benefit."[78]

In the former reference, the poet has given three other amoral acts which are not conducive either to the pursuit of moral merit or for the welfare of the society. It is interesting to note that these dreadful and cruel actions are condemned by most of the civilized races of the world. But they condoned and warned the 'sense of ingratitude' among the people. But, in the Tamil country, the moral consciousness of man appears to have developed in a full swing. Hence the Tamils glorified the 'sense of gratitude' and had a great regard for it. They, therefore idealized the sense of gratitude into a supreme code of conduct and' the infringement of which has no redemption.

From this study, it is apparently clear that all actions spring from the mind, speech and body that result in good or evil results. A moral fiction possesses certain intrinsic characteristics, in virtue of which, it evokes or should evoke in a person contemplating the action which is conditioned by certain psychological aspects or what is generally known as the moral approval. The concept of action as envisaged by ancient Tamils is of abiding interest of moral to us. Utilitarians define moral action by referring to the consequences which they produce. According to the Utilitarians, the criterion for a moral action is the results which are appropriate and yield good fruits. Then the action is considered as a moral action by them, whereas the intrinsic characteristics of the action which conduce to human happiness or which increases the happiness of other people are considered as moral action by ancient Tamils.

(d) Justice

The term Aram signifies "Justice" in some of the Cankam poetry that deal with Purapporul. The administration of justice was the prerogative of the kings from the beginnings of the historic period. Ancient Tamil kings had a high sense of justice. In ancient times, the law of the country evolved from the customary morality of the

diverse people who were the citizens of the country. The kings had great regard for the customs that constitute the conventions which are unwritten laws of the country. Ancient Tamil kings not only ruled, but also acted as the chief judge of his kingdom.

The administration of justice was considered as a solemn and sacred duty of the king. Nakanar of Vellaikkuti offers his good counsel to the king Killi Valavan. He makes reference to the administration of Justice by the kings in general:

"……
Let me speak out to this rich country's king!
Be easy of access at fitting time, as though
The lord of justice sat to hear, and right decree
Such kings have rain on their dominions at their will."[79].

- P.35: 13-16.

The poet lays stress on, the easy accessibility of the king to his subjects in order to hear their complaints and to redress their grievance. He also insists that the administration of justice by the king should be impartial like the decree ordained by the God of Justice, (Virtue). This bears an ample testimony to the cherished ideals of Justice by ancient Tamils.

Another poet expresses that anger, lust, extraordinary clemency, fear, false words, excessive kindness, destruction, cruelty etc., are the great impediments for the free and firm movement of the Wheel of Law (Aram) in the world.[80]

The ideal of the Wheel of Law' or 'Aravali' (Dharmacakra) has been visualized in actual practice by ancient kings of India. From the time of the Acoka; the Great, to the decline and fall of the Vijayanagar Empire in the south, the supreme ideal of polity has been symbolized by 'the wheel of law.'

Ancient Tamil kings were very much interested in exercising their sovereignty over the mighty land by protecting their subjects with a benevolent rule. They used to wield their scepter according

to righteous and just laws in discharging their supreme duty of securing security of their subjects and the state.

The court of, the virtuous king was identified as the Hall of Justice. When the State administration became a complex and complicated one, a new department of justice being created and the responsibilities of the administration of justice were placed under the direct supervision. The king entrusted the work of administering justice to a body of Elders and officials who were held responsible for the proper conduct of justice.

In the Cankam Age, the Council of Uraiyur, impregnable city of valiant Colas has been described as the Hall of Justice[81]in the Cankam classics. It was well-known for its equity.[82] This has been attested by two other verses of Purananuru, and of a very significant reference made in Akananuru.[83]

We have ample testimony for the existence of such a 'Hall of Justice' at Maturai, the capital of the Pantiyan kingdom. Putap-pantiyan, one of the illustrious king of this line, takes solemn oath before he embarks on warfare against the enemies who have besieged his country. One of his vow in his oath is "If I fail to drive the enemies, I would be turned to be a cruel and autocratic ruler swerved from the path of virtue,[84] who have appointed an incapable and inefficient person in the Hall of Justice where Aram persistently pervades to administer justice.[85]

This discloses that the appointment of judges to the court was made after a due consideration and careful observation.

The poet Marutan of Mankuti, while describing the pomp and splendour of the city of Maturai, in the days of Pantiyan king Netunceliyan, the victor of Talaiyalankanam, incidentally refers to the Hall of Justice at Maturai. He gives a graphic, account of it: He describes the ideals of the Hall of Justice as "avoiding fear, affliction, and interest, protecting from the actions of wrath and rapture, and the rightness of the balance duly poised are the lofty ideals of the Hall of Justice."[86].

It is interesting to note that the balance has been the emblem of Justice in India as well as in the Occidental countries. In Europe, Justice was personified as a goddess with a pair of scales in her hand, but in India it has been actually connected with the administration of law.

Besides this, the Hall the of Justice, there seems to have existed a number of courts is borne out by the numerous references made to 'manram,"[87] Potiyil'[88] and 'avai'[89]which might have administered justice as the popular courts of villages and towns like the Witenagemots of Anglo-Saxon period in England. These popular courts in the subsequent periods of the history of South India came to be known as 'Sabhas.'

(e) Polity

In ancient Tamilakam, kingship was generally hereditary. Ancient Tamil kings were constitutional monarchs. They ruled the country in accordance with the established conventions of the country. But never the kings were autocrats. They were law-abiding and benevolent. Their main duty was to rule the country.[90] Their sceptre had been praised as the symbolic representation of Aram."[91] It has been described as 'Aram tuncum cenkol' [அறந்துஞ்சும் செங்கோல்][92] i.e. Justice dwells in the action of sceptre unceasingly.

Pantiyan kings are praised as the guardians of the country with the lofty ideals of Aram.[93]One of the Kali Ode draws our attention to a significant allusion in which a king is described as in the beginning of his career ruled the country in accordance with the codes of Aram, but in due course he was spoiled by the vices. Afterwards he was unable to establish law and order in the country.[94]

This allusion discloses that as far as the kings abide by the 'rule of law' [Aram], they can maintain law and order in the country. But when they have gone astray,their decline and fall would be inevitable.

The thought - provoking observation of Marutan Ila Nakanar, viz. that the four-fold army is not that gains victory but only the administration that persistently pursues the path of Aram that contributes to success.[95] This reminds as of Valluvar's famous maxim.

"It is not lance that gives victory to the king;

but the sceptre, if it be not swayed amiss or is inequitably."[95(a)]

A poet laments for the death of the two kings in a dreadful battle. The poet apprehends that those two kings fought with great regard for the ethics of war.[96]. From this reference to the ethics of war, it is quite evident that ancient Tamil kings persistently adhered to the path of Aram, even in the critical stages in life.

When anarchical assassins cause pain and misery to the travelers and the public in general, the ruler of the country has been abused by the people as non-virtuous ruler who could not secure peace and safeguard his subjects from the malignant attitude of the anarchists.[97]

From the interpretations given by the poets for keeping the umbrella along with the throne as a paraphernalia of the king, it seems that the shade of the king's umbrella has been considered as the grace of the virtuous ruler.[98]

Mighty kings who pursue persistently the path of Aram are praised and revered as a dutiful ruler. They are the guardians of Aram who direct the people in the path of Aram.[99]

Ancient Tamil kings were great warriors. Wars were their favourite pastime. But they were not blind to the sufferings and sorrows of the innocent people. Before declaring war on the hostile country, they warned the innocent and helpless people to seek their own shelter. They appealed to the Brahmans, women, diseased, those who have not obtained sons and cows to hasten to seek shelter under fortresses:In the case of cows, the offensive party voluntarily captured them before beginning war, because they could not seek shelter themselves. This warning was known

as Arattaru nuvalum potkai' or the expression of the lofty ideal that pursues the path of virtue.[100]

Similarly, Pantiyan Netunceliyan is addressed by Marutan of Mankuti as:

"The overlord of domains ancient and wide
Of the mighty Tondai and Cola kings,
Swerving not from the path of Aram
You lead the subjects
To virtue by your example, ever walking,
In the footsteps of your grand sires,"[101]- Pat.6; 990-193.

It is quite evident from the above references, that not only the ideal of ancient Tamil polity, but also the administration which was in practice in those days seems to have rested on a sound basis. The kings realized the evil effects of the tyrannical rule as well as the beneficent results of just rule. Hence they used to cling to the path of Aram with a keen interest in the welfare of the people and they so conducted themselves as to win the love and esteem of all their subjects.

The social and moral well-being of the people were guaranteed and promoted by the righteous administration of the kings. Thus arose the proverbial saying that 'the training of the citizens of the country along the path of virtue and the promotion of moral conduct of the subjects are the foremost duties of the kings.'[102]

(f) The Moral Code

Earlier, we have noticed the Moral code as one of the important source of Aram. The term Aram implies in several references a treatise on Ethics. The moral code has been described as defect less good treatise and treatise on Aram or the Moral code.[103]

(g) God of Virtue

Ancient Tamils conceived the eternal Aram, the source of all human action as a deity that supervised the deeds and duties of

the human beings. This God of Virtue was very popular among ancient Tamils. [103(a)]

In the fag-end of the Cankam Age, the God of Virtue appears to have been identified with Yama, the God of death.[104]This aspect of Aram has been discussed in detail elsewhere.

(h) Devotion to duty

A rare usage is found in Kalittokai. The term 'Arattotu nirral' literally means 'devotion to duty'. In this context, it denotes heroine's loyal constancy towards her lover has been expressed by her maid to her mother.[105]

(i) Other Aspects of Aram

Besides these direct references, the concept and practice of Aram is explained by the various terms such as conduct [ஒழுக்கம்], duty [கடமை]. Virtuous path [நெறி]. chastity [கற்பு] and tradition [மரபு].

By the impact of the Vedic religion and ideal son the Tamil thought, the domain of Aram has been enlarged to embrace some 'traits' of the alien culture. Paripatal bears unfailing evidence to this fact. In one of the verses of Paripatal, the term Aram occurs in the sense of sacrificer or leader of the sacrifice.[106]

This mode of sacrifice with fire-cult was alien to ancient Tamils. They were not accustomed to this mode of worship.[107] Their worship mainly rested on the offerings of flowers to the gods as token of their devotion to God.[108]

In another verse, the Brahmans are distinctly expressed as Aravor i.e. the gracious one.[109]

A careful study of Purananuru, Patirruppattu and Paripatal will reveal that the scope and concept of Aram have been gradually enlarged to embrace the Aryan ideals of sacrificial rites, Vedas and mythology, when the influx of the Aryan thoughts and ideals penetrated into the life and thought of ancient Tamils. It was the Age when the ancient native-culture flourished quite independently of foreign culture, but allowing it also in an amicable manner to

have its own development in this land and slowly incorporating into its essentials. The result of acculturization bloomed as the finest flower of the composite culture in the subsequent Ages.

From a comparative study of Tolkappiyam with the Cankam classics, we are inclined to think that the predominating feature of Ethical development in the Age of Tolkappiyar or prior to him was the customary morality or the established customs of the society. Gradually, the concept of Aram appears to have enlarged to embrace the novel aspects of Aram.

The stage of customary morality succeeded by the speculative or contemplative stage of moral philosophy. In this stage, the concept of Justice and the 'Ethics of polity' are the significant features of moral philosophy. Besides these, the customs and usages of ancient Tamils were given name and form and some master-minds have attempted to classify and systematize them into Ethical codes or treatises. It was the period in which the old customs, traditions and ideals of Aram and the new and alien aspects of Aram appears to have existed side by side. In other words, they were put in to the 'melting pot' to bring forth a magnificent moral philosophy enriched by ancient tradition and ennobled by the new ideals.

Reference:

1. *P.3, 10, 18, 34, 62, 142, 195; Pat.2, 3, 4, 6; Pati.20, 24, 29, 59, 64, 82, 85; Pari.3, 5, 19; Ai.387*
2. *P.3; A.5, 33, 53, 75, 101; 155, 173, 225; Pat.6; K939, 112, 145; N.1, 12, 72, 196, 214, 397; Ku.25, 40, 63, 135, 167, 210, 283, 366; A1.9, 152, 394,*
3. *A.184, 33, 51, 303; K.2, 18, 16, 112; Ku.40, 47, 57, 63, 167; P.6, 9, 320, 266; Pati.15; Pari 6, 7, 11, 16, 20, 22.*
4. *P. 246, 249, 278; 312; 4.5, 9, 33, 51, 73, 86, 173, 155; N.272, 397;*
5. *P.3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 18, 29, 35, 43, 56, 71, 72; Pat.3; 207; 4: 443; 6:19; 489; K.8, 129; Patr.22, 24, 37, 52, 63; N.400; A1.290.*
6. *K.138, 143;. N.22, 141, 226; P.50, 141, 149, 168, 174, 282, 359; A.69, 276; K.11, 149; N.284; Ku.270.*
7. *P.28, 34, 134, 192; 195; K.38.*
8. *Pari. 5, 10, 19; P.34, 141, 174, 192, 195; A.66, 155;*
   Pat. 9: 204; K.21, 38, 59, 99; N.88.
9. *Pari.8; Ai. 387; K. 138, 143; N.22, 141, 226; P.2, 6, 93,*
   182, 397; Pat. I: 126-137, V: 37-39% VI: 470 - 494.
10. *Ai.312.*
11. *A.387.*
12. *N.243.*
13. *4.144.*
14. *"அறன்கடைப்படா அவாழ்க்கையுமென்றும்*
    பிறன்கடைச் செலா அச்செல்வமும் இரண்டும்
    பொருளினாகும் புனையியிழை"
15. *"அறந்தலைப் பிரியாதொகுகலும்" - A. 173 A. 155.*
16. *A. 280.*
17. *A.286.*
18. *P.93.*
19. *P.134.*
20. *P.224.*
21. *Pati.24: 7-8.*
22. *P.397. Dr. G. U. Pope's Translation.*
23. *p. 353.*
24. *"தாமாவிரு வருந் தருமனு மடங்கலும்" - Pari.3: 8.*
25. *Pat.24: 7-8.*

26. Pat.31.

27. Pat.64.

28. Pati.64.

29. Pati. Prefatory Verse No.7.

30. K. 9. English rendering by J.M. Nallaswami Pillai.

31. K.9.

32. K.20.

32 (a). K.200.

33. K.27.

34. K. 42.

35. K.62.

36. K,139.

37. K.141.

37 (a) "திருவுடை மன்னரைக் காணின்
திருமாலைக் கண்டேனே"
- Tiruvoymoli:4:4:8.

38. "கேள்வியும் அறிவும் அறத்தொடு நுண்ணீயை".
- Pari.13.1.55.

39. ……..யாம்இரப்பவை
பொருளும் பொன்னும் போகமும்அல்ல:
நின்பால்
அருளும்,அன்பும்,அறனும் மூன்றும்." - Pari.5: 78-80.

40. Pari. Tiratu: 3:1.

41. Ibid. 1:18-21.

42. Ibid.2:48.

43. English Translation by J.M. Nallaswami Pillai.

43 (a). Pat.I. Nac.com.p.41-42.

44. Pat.8: 200-210.

45. Pat.9:40-44.

46. "அறம் எனப்படுவது யாதெனக் கேட்பின்,
மறவாது இதுகேள், மன்னுயிர்க்கெல்லாம்
உண்டியும் உடையும் உறையுளும் அல்லது
கண்டதில்" - M.25:228-231.

47. "அறநெறி இதுவெனத்தெளிந்தவென்
பிறைநுதற்குறுமகள் போகிய சுரனே"
- Ai.371. References is also made in A.2.44.

48. N.63.

49. N.166.

50. A.5.

51. "பொருளில்லான் இளமைபோல் புல்லென்றாள்...
அறஞ்சாரான் மூப்பேபோல் அழிதக்காள்" - K.38.

52. English rendering by J.M. Nallaswami Pillai.

53. Pat.6.11.468-74.

54. Ibid.11.500-502. Reference is also made to the, 'Path of Virtue' in Ku.247 and N.63.

55. Ai.118, 229; N.227, 275, 277; A.207, 219, 256, 294;
and K.74, 86, 144.

56. Ai.152, 212, 312, 4.85.

57. Ku.244; N.63, 145, 376; A.60.

58. K.144.

59. K.22.

60. Ku.28.

61. A. 255.

62. P.44, 390; K.39.

63. P.93; Par1.3, 8; Ai.152; Ku.284 etc.

64."மருந்தாய்ந்து கொடுத்த அறவோன்போல"
- N.136.

65. "அரிதாய அறனெய்தி அருளியோர்க் களித்தலும்
பெரிதாய பகைவென்று பேளுரைத் தெறுதலும்
புரிவமர் காதலிற் புணர்ச்சியுந் தருமெனப்
பிரிவெண்ணிப் பொருள்வயிற் சென்றநங் காதலர்."
- K.11:1- 4.
English Translation by J.M. Nallaswami Pillai.

66. N.202.

67. K.92.

68. K.147.

69. P.145.

70. P.175.

71. P.377.

72. P.395.

73. Pari. 14:28.

74. Ai.332.

75. K. 140 and also reference is made in P.28.

76. P.12.

77. P.34.

78. T.110. Translation W.H. Drew.

79. Translation by Dr. G. U. Pope.

80. "சினனே காமங் கழிகண் ணோட்டம்
அச்சம் பொய்ச்சொ லன்புமிக வுடைமை
தெறல் கடுமையொடு பிறவு மிவ்வுலகத்(து)
அறந்தெரி திகிரிக்கு வழியடை யாகும்" - Pati.22:1-5.

81. "……அறம் நின்று நிலையிற்றாகலின்
மறங்கெழு சோழர் உறந்தை" - P.39.

82. "மறங்கெழு சோழர உறந்தை அவையத்து
அறங்கெட அறியாதாங்கு" -N.400

83. P.58; 224.

84. A.93.

85. "அறனிலை திரிய அன்பின் அவையத்து
திறனில் ஒருவனை நாட்டி, முறைதிரிந்து
மெலிகோல் செய்தேன் ஆகுக" - P.71:7-9.

86. "அக்கமும் அவலமும் ஆர்வரும் நீங்கி
செற்றமும்உவகையும்செய்யாதுகாத்து
ஞெமன் கோலன்ன செம்மைத் தாகி
சிறந்த கொள்கை அறங்கூறு அவையமும்" - Pat:6:489-492.

87. மன்றம்

88. பொதியில்

89. அவை

90. "ஆறுமுட் குருஅது அறம்புரிந்து ஒழுகும்
நாடுபுறந் தருதல் நினக்குமார் கடனே" - Pati: 6:16-20.

91."அறனொடு புணர்ந்த திறனறி செங்கோல்" - Pat.2; 230.
"அறம்புரி செங்கோல்" - Pat.4; 35.

92. "அறம்துஞ்சும் செங்கோலையே" - Pat.20.
"அறம்புரி செங்கோல்" - Ai. 290
"அறம் கடைப்பிடித்த செங்கோலுடன்" - A. 338
"முறையுடை அரசன் செங்கோல்" - K. 276

93. A.27.

94. K. 129:4-6.

95. "அறநெறி முதற்றே யரசின் கொற்றம்" - P.55

95 (a). T.546 - Translation by M.S. Puranalingam Pillai.

96. "அறத்தின் மண்டிய மறப்போர் வேந்தே" -P.62.

97. "அறனில் வேந்தன் ஆளும்" - A.109:14

98. P.85.

99. K.99 and N. 146.

100. P.9.

101. Translation by J.M. Nallaswami Pillai.

102. "நன்னடை நல்கல் வேந்தற்குக் கடனே" - P.312.

103. "புரையில் நற்பனுவல்" - P.15.

103 (a). P.31, 166 and 362; A.28; K.39, 96.

104. P.35, 159; A1.393, 394; N.42; Pati.90 & K.16:22.

105. K.39:20.

106. "தீவளிவிசும்பு நிலனீரைந்து
ஞாயிறுந் திங்களும் அறனும் ஐவரும்"- Pari.3:4-5.
"அவை தீ, வளி, விசும்பு, நிலம், நீரென்னும்
பூதங்கள் ஐந்தும், ஞாயிறும், திங்களும் வேள்வி
முதவ்வனுமென இவை" - Com.p.12.

107. P.T. Srinivasa Aiyangar: Pre-Aryan Tamil Culture.p.18.

108. "மல்லல் மூதூர்மலர்ப் பலிஉணீஇய" - N.73.

109. Pari.Collect.3:1.

CHAPTER-II

THE ETHICAL MAN OF THE CANKAM AGE

The moral life of ancient Tamils is embedded in the Cankam classics. As we have noticed earlier, the ultimate goal of human aspirations according to Tamils, can be achieved by leading a virtuous domestic life par excellence, quenching the urge of the inner spirit in man, by gathering all the power of thought and losing the self in search of God. The various stages of this great endeavour are clearly envisaged and enunciated by ancient Tamils.

(a) The Picture of the Ethical Man

The supreme expression of the ideal world Tamilian is the 'portrait of Canror. By 'Canror,' ancient Tamils visualised the 'Perfect Man'. Every one aspired to become a 'Perfect Man' in ancient Tamil country. Ponmutiyar, an eminent poetess of the Cankam Age, expresses the important duties of parents, kings, labourers and the sons of the Tamil society as follows:

"My magnificent duty as mother is to bring forth
and to bring up;
To make Canron is the father's duty;
To make [one] chivalrous is the king's duty;
To give the spear is the duty of the blacksmith;
And my son's duty is –
To plunge into the battlefield,
To pierce the elephant in the enemy's line
And return triumphant." -P.312.

In this verse, the poetess defines the duties of each and every individual which bear ample testimony to the lofty ideals and noble principles of ancient Tamils, that are unique in the Ethical philosophy of the Tamils.

The noteworthy aspect of these duties, which seeks special mention here is the father's duty. The duty of the father is not the pursuit of acquiring immense wealth and prosperity for the sake of his son. But the father's foremost duty is to educate his son, giving training in the professional arts and above all making him a cultured gentleman. This indicates the importance attached by ancient Tamils to the noble duty of making their son a Perfect Man.

This poem is the spontaneous outpouring of the filial love of a tender heart. Hence it discloses the cherished wishes and anxiety of the mother in building the character and conduct of her son as a Canron. This view is strengthened by the observations of Valluvar. "The mother, who hears the son being called 'Canron,' will rejoice more than she did at his birth.[1]" These two evidences give a graphic account of the cherished ideal of the Age.

The duty of the son is not only means killing the elephant of the enemies which exhibits the martial skill in winning the battle, but it also implies that for a brave and chivalrous youth, it is far better to meet a very strong and significant enemy, even though he is not able to defeat him completely, than to attack and destroy a feeble and insignificant one. This reminds us of Valluvar's maxim which asserts that "It is more pleasant to hold the arrow that has missed an elephant rather than that which has hit a hare in the forest.[2]

The term 'Canror' is very frequently used in Cankam literature. Literally, it means those who were perfect in learning moral conduct. But in general it was used to denote those who were noble in their thought, speech, action and wisdom. In Purananuru, the chivalrous heroic soldiers of ancient Tamil country are praised as Canror.[3] The poets of the Cankam Age are also called as Canror by the commentators.[4]

The term 'Canror' is derived from the root 'calpu' (சான்பு) which gives the meaning of perfection, good quality, nobility and

excellence. Canranmai (சான்றாண்மை) is the derivative of the two terms 'calpu' and 'anmai'. In this context, 'anmai' represents 'the ability to regulate' and thus it means 'the ability of regulating the virtues that lead to perfection.' Valluvar has defined 'Calpu' as:

"Love, modesty, beneficence, benignant grace
With truth, are pillars five of perfect
Virtue's resting place".[5]

He also describes the characteristic features of Canror. "All good qualities are natural to them. They know what is proper and seek protection. To the Canror, the only good is the goodness of character; all other good cannot be classed as in any way good. They would not disclose the faults of others. Humility is the great strength of the Canror. It is the weapon by which they disarm their foe. They readily accept the `defeat even at the hands of the inferior as in the same manner towards their superior. Their perfect moral conduct is being illuminated by their kind and good acts even to the evil doers. [6]

Valluvar extols the glories of the Canror as "For them poverty is not a disgrace because they possess the strength of virtue known as nobility. They are said to be the shore of the sea of perfection, who will never change their mind, even though the ages change. If the perfect virtue of Canror decrease, the mighty earth would not be able to bear its burden.[7]

Cankam literature gives a graphic account of Canror and their message to the world. Canror has been described by the poet 'Pisirantaioyar, as "Perfect men who subued their five senses and governed their conduct." Pisirantaiyar himself seems to have set a very fitting example of Canror among his contemporaries.[8] They were the embodiment of goodness and graciousness.[9] Canror were well known for their loving kindness and their striving for the good of others.[10]

They were very humane in their outlook, even at the risk of their own life. When a friend gives a cup of poison to the Canror,

they will politely accept and drink it. They were thus very noble and cultured men.[11] Tiruvalluvar also makes a reference to such noblemen in another context. In describing the positive qualities of graciousness and benignity, Valluvar praises the magnanimous attitude of the Canror as,

> "They drink with smiling grace, though poison
> Interfused they see,
> Who seek the praise of all esteemed courtesy.[12]

This supreme virtue and high-heartedness of the Canror secured them a unique place in ancient Tamil society.

It is interesting to note from this observation that the conception of Civilization was envisaged by ancient Tamils. They did not make any distinction between 'Culture' and 'Civilization'. But they used to represent the finer aspects of culture and civilization by the term 'nakarikam' [Civilization]. Nakarikam has a wider connotation which implies the refinement of body, mind and spirit, besides the systematized and luxurious aspects of life.

Civilization is said to be the organization of life which makes civil society possible. Culture, on the other hand is believed to be the resultant of such organizations and expresses itself through language and art, religion and philosophy, social habits and customs, political institutions and economic organization. Both these aspects of culture and civilization are the two sides of the same coin signified by the term Nakarikam in Tamil. Hence cultured men were known as "the best gentlemen".

They discharged their duties with great care and never escaped from duties and obligations of their every day life.[13] Though they were overwhelmingly kind to others, they never desired the happiness which is coupled with disgrace. [14] They used to feel a sense of modesty even before others begin to praise

them. [15] Valluvar says that the sense of modesty is an ornament to the Canror.[16]

The nobility of manliness of abstaining from casting a glance at another man's wife is not only a virtue to the Canror but also it is the mark of exemplary character and conduct.[17] Above all these, it is more interesting to note that the glory of the Canror lies in their equity. It was an ornament to Canror who never swerved to either side, and remained just like the fixed balance. [18] They realised adversity and prosperity would attend on all in life. Hence, they preserved fairness of their mind even in those circumstances.[19]

Their conception of wealth is noteworthy, which has been praised and practiced by ancient Tamils. Canror never recognized bearing long titles, a wide fame and riding on speedy vehicles as wealth. But they believed that these are the fruits of their deeds of their previous births. They thought that the gracefulness and the tender feeling that springs spontaneously at the sight of the poor [who seek refuge from their sorrows and sufferings] as real wealth.[20]

These significant features of the Canror, have been earnestly appreciated in one of the lyrics of Purananuru.

"Gold, corals, pearls and gems from the blue mountains are the products of distant places and from different sources. But if we make a precious ornament of these four, then they will glitter with splendor and harmony. In this manner, Canror would associate with Canror; others associate with their equals.[21]

A Pantiyan king and poet of the Cankam Age had put all the significant features of the Canror in a single verse. He raises the controversial question, "Does this world really exist?" and he himself answers this question. He says that this world really exists, because, "there do exist the great men who will not partake even of the rare Indra's nectar without company; they are free from anger and sloth; they fear not, nor

quail [drawback] before what others fear; they readily give up their life for the sake of fame, and will not for all the world, take up anything that will spoil their reputation; they selflessly strive for the good of others. Hence this world exists. [22]

Valluvar emphatically remarks, "it is because of the worthy men (Canror) of good nature that this world really exists; but for them, this world would perish and crumble to dust. [23]

Having this cultural heritage as the basis, Auvvai, the prominent poetess of the Cankam Age praises the world as:

> "There is nothing significant in being a country
> or forest and a lowland or a highland.
> Where the men are good, there thou art good: Long
> live the world;" [24]

It is apparently clear from this poem that a country cannot become a 'welfare state' by the mere fact that it has been endowed with plenty of natural resources. On the other hand, if a state is poor in its natural resources and it is fortunate to have good citizens, then it is considered to be a good and prosperous country. In a true sense even if the land is not fertile if it is inhabited by virtuous people it will turn into a flourishing country. If the citizens are non-virtuous, the land looses its fertility and brings about decadence and disaster to the country.

Hence, we cannot blame the land for its fertility or its barrenness, it depends on the moral and magnanimous conduct of its inhabitants, their intelligence, insight, strenuous and sustained effort which makes their land Good Earth. Ancient Tamil Canror thus laid stress on the moral conduct of the citizens of a country which is the main source for the welfare and prosperity of a country.

(b) The Magnanimous Man

In this context, it is appropriate to compare the Ideal man to the Magnanimous Man as conceived by Aristotle with the

Ethical man or Canror of Ancient Tamil country. Aristotle's expression of the Ideal man is the portrait of the Magnanimous man. He is the man of 'Justifiable Pride.' It must be understood that the Magnanimous Man is Aristotle's Perfect man. He is perfected in the exercise of practical reason, which Aristotelian psychology has the function of controlling the appetites and thereby ensuring the perfection of the moral virtues. On the intellectual side, the crowning moral virtue is 'phronesis' or the practical wisdom, on the practical side it is 'sophrosyne' or the soundness of the mind; and both are the functions of the practical reason. The Magnanimous Man, being the man perfected in the supreme moral virtues of 'phronesis' and 'sophrosyne'. and as such stand as one Aristotelian ideal of perfected human nature, i.e., the perfect Ethical Man.

Aristotle has given a graphic account of the 'Magnanimous Man' in his 'Nicomachean Ethics.'[25]

(c) Contemplative Man

In his peroration to Ethics, Aristotle gives another picture of the Ideal man, i.e. Contemplative Man who appears to be the counterpart of the Magnanimous Man. Contemplative Man in his perfect exercise of his Contemplative nature enjoys a life akin to that of God; and consequently Aristotle concludes, 'Perfect happiness, [i.e. the highest good] is some form of contemplative activity.'[26]

The Magnanimous Man and the Contemplative Man are two aspects of the Perfect Man. The Contemplative Man is perfect with his God-like Contemplative reason. The Magnanimous Man is perfect in practical reason and is firmly rooted as a man of flesh and blood in this world. The Perfect Man when compared to the Contemplative and Magnanimous Man are therefore one by the divine quality of self-sufficiency.

(4) Comparative study of the Ethical Man

With all the laudable traits of character the 'Ethical Man' of Aristotle is deficient with a most exemplary consistency and completeness, in the supreme values of human aspirations. Neither the Magnanimous Man nor the contemplative man knew of the 'human brotherhood' or the "love of humanity". Whereas the Canror, the perfect men of ancient Tamilakam conveyed the message of the "human brother hood" as "To us all town are one; all men are our kin" into the suffering humanity.[27]

The 'Ideal Man' of Aristotle is devoid of humility his very title, the 'Man of Jutifiable pride itself reveals that humility is no part of his moral constitution. He has no reason or cause to be a humble being as he is morally self-sufficient to the core with complete practical wisdom and flawless self command.

On the other hand, the Prefect Man of the Cankam Age, as we have observed earlier is a Perfect Man who subdued his five senses and governed his conduct. He is the embodiment of love, modesty, beneficency, benignant grace and truth. He is not only humble but also modest.

In Aristotle's Magnanimous or Contemplative Man we notice the poverty of benevolences or philanthropy. The sufferings of mankind did not touch his heart . But the Canror of Tamilakam are well known for their grace and compassion and their selfless striving for the good of others. The Ethical Man of Aristotile is more concerned with the welfare and prosperity of the state, while the Ethical Man of ancient Tamil country is very much interested in uplifting the moral, material and spiritual life of every individual.

Lastly, the Ethical Man of ancient Greece takes it for granted, that the inequality of human beings, which is not only repugnant to modern sentiment but also contrary to the cherished ideals of humanity throughout the ages.

The 'Canror' of ancient Tamilakam maintains that every human being is an end in himself and asserts that 'all man are born equal' The difference among them are entirely due to their occupation.[28]

The noteworthy aspect of similarity between the prefect son of Aristotle and Canror of the Tamils are in their attitude, towards the pursuit of honour and temperate disposition.

'Magnanimous man' must of necessity says Aristotle, seek honour above everything. The Canror will readily give up their life for the sake of fame and honour.[29]

The 'Ethical Man' of Aristotle in every kind of fortunes, good and ill, what ever befell neither enjoyed at prosperity nor downcast adversity. The Canror of Tamilakam as neither rejoined that life is happy nor did they decry it with displeasure.[30]

The man cares 'not to be praised, nor for others to be blamed" The Ethical man of the Tamil country, did not praise the great in wonder and still did not despise the mean.[31]

Though we are impressed with the similarities in general, we are unable to appreciate but feel pity for the unattractive figure of the Perfect man in whom the egalitarian outlook and humanistic approach are absolutely absent. He is depicted as a man of intellectual calibre with emotional poverty. Hence he lacks the prophetic outlook. Above all both the Magnanimous and Contemplative Man of Aristotle are 'imaginary human beings' who are 'idealized' as the finest flower of Greek culture.

But the Canror of Tamilakam were not Robinson Crusoes and Don quixotes, but men of flesh and blood who not only preached but also practised and lived in the midst of the people. So the path of virtue is popularly known as 'Canror cenrea neri' (சான்றோர் சென்ற நெறி).[32]

They are unique in their self-forgetful service to others and living "not for self but for others." Canror are thus the great pioneers of humanism and 'altruism' in the ancient world and at the same time, the Ethical Beings who inculcated the ideal and spirit of 'Universal love' and the 'brotherhood of man.'

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   தோல்கண் மறைப்ப வொருங்கு மாய்ந்தனரே"
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   -Tol Col : P.1

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   'நன்றறியுள்ளத்துச் சான்றோர்" *- P. 191*
9. *"தாமறி செம்மைச் சான்றோர்"* *- Pati.72*
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19. T.115

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சான்றோர் செல்வம் என்பது சேர்ந்தோர்
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21. P.218

22. P.182

23. T.996

24. P.187

25. 'Aristotle : N.Ethics, pp.121-128

26. Ibid.x.vii, 1-91; viii. 7.

27. "யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர்" - P. 192

28. "பிறப்பொக்கும் எல்லா உயிர்க்கும் சிறப்பொவ்வா
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29. "புகழெனின் உயிரும் கொடுக்குவர்" -P.182

30. "..... வாழ்தல்
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இன்னா தென்றலு மிலமே" -P.192

31. "பெரியோரை வியத்தலும் இலமே
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32. P.134

CHAPTER III
THE MESSAGE OF THE CANROR

(a) The Greatness of Canror

Canror were men of wisdom and deep insight.. Their love for humanity was widest in its scope being conterminous with the whole universe. The intensity of their love towards the suffering humanity gave a new impetus to the development of moral conscience in ancient Tamil society which was continuous, everlasting and universal.

In ancient Tamil society, Canror had a great reputation. They represented the different stratas of ancient Tamil society. They were poets and bards, princes and philosophers, ascetics and householders, peasants and business men. They came into prominence as great sages and savants, through their incessant deeds of love performed in the course of their daily work as peasants, teachers, poets and kings:

Even such great sages like Tiruvalluvar, according to tradition did not retire to a hermitage that was far from the madding crowd, but lived and functioned in the very heart of the busy and active world. They were acquainted with the poor and rich, the sound and diseased, the learned and ignorant. The social status in their life have led them across the path of philosophers, artists, poets, heroes, sages and seers. At the same time they have studied the hidden secrets of their minds and the yearnings of their hearts.

Then they came to the rescue of ancient Tamil society with a philosophy of life that was neither other worldly, nor pessimistic in its approach but practical in the true sense of the term. Their philosophy of life, never laid stress on individualism, but it is universal in its thought and pragmatic in its outlook. They represented the highest peaks of creativity, ennobling men morally, enlightening them mentally and elevating them spiritually.

Their message is yet a panacea to the sufferings of humanity. When ever they found that people were indulging extremely in the pleasures of life, they never failed to remind the higher values of human life and thus inculcated the ideal of golden mean in the pursuit of pleasures. In order to make them realize and to direct them in the right path, Canror lavishly described the ephemeral nature of the worldly existence.[1]

(b) Nature of the World

They induced the people to think over the nature of the world which is transient.[2]By reminding the spirit of 'unstableness of life and 'world,' Canror advised the people to achieve permanence and establish their fame in the world by performing noble and magnificent deeds that promote the welfare of humanity as a whole.[3]

Canror used to persuade the people not to accumulate and by that action lose the utility of wealth. They have explained the true nature of the unstable wealth and persuaded the people to utilise the full benefits of wealth at once by means of moral actions.[4]

After observing some people who used to neglect the virtues of life and postpone moral deeds to a later period in life, thinking that they are too young to lead a moral life, Canror have emphasised the importance of moral action to them, as the intrinsic characteristic of man who should strive to live in accordance with virtue. Hence they have deprecated the young to learn the lesson of observing the elders who have lost their mighty youthfulness which could not be regained and reminded that there is no one who has known the span of his life-time in the world.[5]

The ephemeral nature of the pleasures of life and youthfulness are like the shadow that follows the arrow which strikes the target in a few seconds. By explaining the transient nature of life, they urged the people to perform the righteous deeds as early as possible.

(c) The Effects of Moral Action

Canror of the Cankam Age persistently believed in the supremacy of fate and this coloured their outlook and their philosophy of life. They clearly explained the effects of moral action by several illustrations of which the following are more important.

They say, "Men of filthy mind would doubt whether we will do any good deed or not. The hunter who has gone for an elephant to hunt in a bloom may get an elephant without any strenuous effort. But one who had gone to hunt a quail may return with great disappointment.[6]

In the case of the great men who are inspired by lofty ideals, and if they are destined to endure the fruits of their deeds, they may enjoy the 'pleasures in the Heaven. If they do not enjoy the pleasures in the Heaven, they will experience the dreadful poverty in the next birth; if they don't have 'rebirth, it is an excellent thing to die after establishing one's name and fame in the world as high as the sky-scraping Himalayas."[7]

This reveals us one of the unique ideals cherished by the Canror, which has been clearly expressed by Valluvar as "Aim loftily whatever you think of. Have high ideals. Though they may fail they will not have the nature of the failure (but will be grand.)."[8]

Aiming at the lofty ideals has been praised and preached even by the westerners in modern times: The significant feature of this great ideal lies deep-rooted in human psychology.

The next important aspect or point in the message of the Canror is their insistence upon the gradual development of the moral spirit in man. Every man must endure the fruits of their deeds either good or evil. No one can escape from it. Hence they entreat the, people to discharge their duties in accordance with Aram which may lead to the eternal bliss. Even if they do not care for the eternal bliss it is an excellent thing to establish their name and fame in the world during their life-time. At least for the sake of this reason, every individual must strive after moral good.

Everyone in the world is interested in acquiring fame by any means. The Canror who have noted this weakness of humanity in general, make them realize that if the means are good for the pursuit of fame, the end may be ennobled. So they emphasise that the deeds of each and every individual should be good and promote the welfare of humanity, then their fame would be established everlastingly in this world. By this process of instruction, they ultimately induce the people to recognize the value of performing good deeds for its own sake.

Canror have laid great emphasis on the human attitude towards pleasures and pains of life. Their object in elucidating both the brighter and darker sides of human life is to infuse moral strength to those, who are afraid of or dejected and have lost all their hopes of joy in life. In order to make them feel, that life is not a burden but one of sustained activity, love towards all which will yield the fruits of life.[9]

(d) The Delightful Wish

Then they exhort us to discharge our duties without harming others: They have appealed to men of perfection as: "Ah men of perfection! Who have grown old by wasting the life, you will suffer very much when the Lord of Death will carry away your life. If you do not have any inclination, towards moral action, please abstain at least from evil-deeds, which is the delightful wish of all and also it is the way that will lead to the path of virtue."[10]

They dreamt that there must not be any distinction between man and man. Various strifes and struggles between various groups of humanity induced them to realize the brotherhood of man. They thought that there is no difference between the king who rules the whole world and the uncultured hunter who carefully watches the animals to hunt day and night without sleep. Because both of them require only a measure of rice for their food and two pieces of cloth to cover their body. Other needs of them are also similar. Hence one should always be 'unselfish' and must share his wealth' with others."[11]

This pronounces the unique ideal which has been appraised as the modern sentiment and watchwords of humanity viz., equality, fraternity and liberty. It is interesting to note that ancient Tamil Canror have visualised a casteless and creedless society, but also anticipated classless society which is considered to be the supreme principle of Marxist philosophy of Socialism.

In this verse, the Canror believes that there is no basic difference between a king and a hunter in their dire needs of livelihood. They are common to the whole humanity. Hence men are born free with equal rights. There is no fundamental difference or distinction between man and man. If one realizes that all men are the children of God, then there would be no need to find fault with or to make artificial barriers of castes, creeds and classes among humanity. There is no class as earmarked as kingly class or as hunters class by birth. But the opportunities which are bestowed upon them elevate some into kings, nobles, warriors, poets and philosophers and degrade some others into hunters, slaves, labourers and destitute. Therefore it is not the prerogative of the privileged class to oppress and suppress the rights and liberties of the downtrodden. They must approach them with unselfish motive and humanitarian outlook.

This humane tendency will make them feel thes orrows and sufferings of humanity as their own. Then they will realize that there will be no real value to the accumulation of wealth and come forward to share their wealth with others.

Hence Nakkirar the ancient Tamil Canror makes earnest request to mankind especially of the privileged class, to ponder over the real nature of the world and persuades them to share their wealth with others.

(e) The Importance of Education

Canror were well aware of the importance of learning that will create a new society which will recognize in a dynamic spirit the supreme ideal of human brotherhood.

Education from early times to the present day reflected in a large measure the needs of the time as well as the outlook of the Age. The Importance of education is emphasised elegantly by a Canror of the Cankam Age, who was else a king of Pantiyan dynasty. He says:

"It is always good to learn without feeling shame to stand behind a teacher, paying him tributes and venerating him. Even the mother (whose affection is usually equal for all her children) would respect the learned among her own children. The king will not respect the age, but learning. Further a scion of the superior class would find it indispensable to admire and respect the one of lower class who has distinguished himself by learning.[12]

This careful observation of an ancient Tamil king discloses that ancient Tamils recognized education as the foundation upon which the whole edifice of the moral culture of the individual can be built. Every individual seems to have expected to be learned even by experiencing the various vicissitudes and difficulties in life. Hence, the Canror laid stress on learning by any means which would make them the better citizens of the world.

(f) The 'One World' Ideal

We can recollect the unique message of the Canror that constitute all the fragments of their lofty ideals and deep insight culled from the Cankam literature and discussed above. They are expressed in a single verse as the message of ancient Tamil Canror to humanity by Kaniyan of Punkunram, the famous poet and philosopher of the Cankam Age:

"To us all towns are one, all men our kin
Life's good comes not from other's gift, nor ill
Man's pains and pains relief are from within.
Death's no new thing;nor do our bosoms thrill
When joyous life seems like a luscious draught.
When grieved, we patient suffer; for, we deem
This much-praised life of ours a fragile raft
Borne down the waters of some mountain stream
That O'er huge boulders roaring seeks the plain.
Tho' storms with lightnings flash from darken'd skies
Descend, the raft goes on as fates ordain
Thus have we seen in vision of the wise!
We marvel not at greatness of the great
Still less despise we men of low estate."[13]

The supreme philosophy of life as conceived by ancient Tamils is clearly expressed in this magnificent message of Canror.

This poem also pronounces, the idea of humanity as a single race, beings with a common life and a common general interest, which sounds like the most characteristic and significant product of the modern thought.

The Canror of the Cankam Age have gone beyond the barriers of class, community, nation and religion and embraced the whole humanity as their brethren. For the realisation of this cherished ideal of 'one world,' they have made successful attempts to create a congenial atmosphere in the minds of ancient Tamil people.

They persistently propagated the ideal of human brotherhood by laying stress on the self-realisation of man, which would awake the soul in man and make him recognise the oneness of spirit that pervades the whole universe.

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3. *“மன்னா வுலகத்து மன்னுதல் குறித்தோர்;*
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6. *“வைகல்தோறும் இன்பமும் இளமையும்*
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We are proud to pay our tributes to this phenomenal writer who marked an imprint on Sangam Literature. A passionate hero from an agrarian family in Karunguzhi, carved a niche for himself by his literary acumen. This erudite and prolific writer with indepth scholarship in Ancient Tamil history and literature has left a legacy: a treasure trove. May this book guide the reader in academic and literary pursuits.

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